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DRIVING-TEST—TURKISH STYLE

BY ASHENDEN

THE taxi-drivers of Istanbul drive with an expertise that is equalled only by their abandon. And the twisted, narrow streets and fearsome inclines of the city are often the scene of hairbreadth escapes, followed by protracted verbal duels. Here and there one can see notices enjoining drivers to descend some frightening declivity with '*Vitesse*,' which makes it difficult for the average traveller with only a partial knowledge of the language to repress a shudder. But '*Vitesse*' in Turkish means 'In gear'; and well intentioned though such injunctions may be, they are seldom respected.

For many years it seemed to me unnecessary to own or drive a car in Turkey. I preferred to leave such hazardous occupations to the professionals whose nerves were attuned to the demands of their trade. And as a non-driver, it was possible to relax and enjoy one's journeys, secure in the knowledge that a master's hand was at the wheel. For travels in the interior I had an arrangement with a delightful taxi-owner who was also a companion; he was ready to take me anywhere a car could conceivably go, and to places where a car had never been before. With small parties of friends some memorable journeys were planned and carried

to fruition, based on his big blue De Soto, and in the days before even the first vestiges of Gran Turismo had penetrated to the Anatolian Plateau. Those were travels in a purer tradition, where we used our sleeping-bags and rucksacks to get us to our goals.

But times change. By 1958 there were no spare parts, no tyres and even a shortage of fuel. The continuing foreign-exchange crisis had brought transport to the verge of a standstill. Taxis were hard to get. No one would risk his car in the interior. With a heavy heart I decided to buy a vehicle. Owing to the ban on imports, ancient jalopies, with a decade of service and 500,000 kilometres on the clock, were fetching thousands of pounds. But fortunately, at just that time, the British Embassy put up for sale a 1951 Land-Rover, in bad condition, and I was able to acquire it by private agreement. It took six months to effect the necessary repairs, but by the autumn of '58 the car was ready for the road. All I needed was a driving-licence.

To acquire a driving-licence in Turkey is now, for a resident, quite a difficult thing. The test, consisting of a written exam. in two parts, and three different trials of practical skill, is liable to last the whole day. The first part of the driving-test is a kind of circus trick, so difficult that even an expert driver is unlikely to pass without preparation.

I enrolled myself at the Fikri Tan Driving-School for a three months' course on the mechanics of a car, as well as for three months of driving-lessons, at the rate of three lessons a week. It was an intensive course, and there was prep. to be done after each mechanical lesson. In addition, I was directed to master the two hundred and one Articles of the Turkish Traffic Law, which was to form the subject of the second part of the written exam. As the Director of the Istanbul Sixth Section of Police (the Traffic Police) had recently brought out a volume on the subject of the Traffic Law, it seemed only prudent to make this book my chosen text.

The instructor in mechanics from whom I had private lessons was an elderly gentleman with a quiet manner and a gift for imparting knowledge. We worked on cut-away models with moving parts and transparent sides; the school was excellently set up in every way. I had bought the standard local work on the internal combustion engine, and the brakes, steering, drive suspension and electrical circuits of a car. The book went into great detail and had diagrams of everything, including likely defects, faults, and the remedies that could be applied to every breakdown and emergency. Our method of working was for me to study a portion of the book before our lesson, then have the visual demonstration on the cut-away models, with comments and explanation from the instructor. After this I would go home and write out a précis of what I had learnt, referring also to the book. For the non-mechanically-minded

person it is difficult to think of a better way of causing knowledge to sink in. By the end of the course I had completed thirty pages of tightly-written quarto paper containing the essence of what I had learnt. All this was naturally in Turkish, and I still do not know the English names of the many component parts that make up a car.

The Traffic Law studies were in a way more difficult. The legalistic language constituted a hurdle; but the biggest difficulty was the absence of a teacher. Visual and oral instruction certainly aids learning, and solitary studies appear to demand a more severe effort mentally.

Meanwhile the driving-lessons were progressing. I had graduated from the twin-control car on the open hillside to an aged Austin on the U-bend obstacle course. The U-bend is the pivot of the Turkish driving-test. The bend itself is exceedingly tight; there is only just room for a car to get round it. An error of inches will cause one of the posts on the bend to be knocked down, which of course carries automatic disqualification. Apart from the sharpness and tightness of the bends, the course has the further difficulty of gradient; the sides of the U lie on fairly steep inclines.

In the actual test the candidate drives half-way up one of the sides of the U and is then told to stop, using only the footbrake. A stake is driven into the ground just behind the car, and the candidate is told to carry on up the incline, without using the handbrake, and without of course slipping onto the stake. If this test is passed, then the candidate drives up to the bend of the U, inches round it, turning to the right at snail's pace, and descends the other arm of the U. The test is afterwards repeated the reverse way —turning left, that is. And finally the car has to be driven backwards, going round to the left, then backwards to the right. Driving backwards to the right is the hardest, representing a turn on the blind side and calling for extraordinarily nice judgment.

For weeks I toiled at my U-bends. The three plain turns were mastered in the end; but the backwards-to-the-right, blind-side manœuvre was a tough nut. Even at the close of the course I was as often as not knocking over a post on this run.

Now, you may ask: 'What of road work and ordinary motoring conditions?' The astonishing fact is that practically no attention is paid to road-work and the road-test is purely perfunctory. The Turkish driving-test teaches only dexterity, and dexterity of a high order. Apart from the U-bend there is a parking-test which is almost as difficult, and involves complicated manœuvres in a very cramped space.

After I had mastered (more or less) the U-bend, the parking-lessons and the mechanical course, the Fikri Tan School told me that I had a good chance of success and should apply to the Sixth Section of the Police for permission to sit for the exam. The Sixth Section informed

me that I would have to pass a medical examination first.

The medical took place at the Ministry of Hygiene. I called there one morning in November and found a queue of candidates standing in ragged array down the passages. They were mainly budding lorry-drivers and taxi-men; some of them with beards and cloth caps, looking rather fierce, but all nevertheless ready to crack a joke. The medical exam. was not without its humour. When my turn came, I was shown first of all into the eye specialist's room, where a cunning examination of visual powers, including some ingenious tests for colour-blindness, was carried out. Having passed this trial I was given a favourable report in writing and sent to visit the ear man. The same thorough testing took place; then the ear specialist told me to walk away, turn a corner half into another room, and keep my back to him. A ludicrous conversation ensued. The specialist whispered silly questions in Turkish, very softly so that they were barely audible, and when I answered in my normal voice, he kept whispering, "Speak up," equally gently, so that in the end I was almost shouting in response to disembodied murmurs. It is a good thing that the resident alienist did not see me at this moment, for it might have given rise to an unfortunate misunderstanding. The aurist finally recalled me to his desk and said with a beaming smile, "You have excellent hearing, my son."

Next on my list was the co-ordination and muscular test, administered by what I understood to be a general pathologist, but he might have been a football-trainer, so eager was he to bring out the best in one physically. After the conventional reflex tests with the hammer, he asked me to stand on one foot, and then go down on one leg bending the knee. This is hard to do. But a mountaineering background stood me in good stead. "Now I want to see your calves," he said. "Roll up your trousers." He felt my calf-muscles meditatively, and concluded, "Very good, I see you are in training. I will send you to see the alienist now."

The resident alienist, who had a moustache and wore glasses as all good alienists should, asked me a number of questions about my age, occupation, tastes and proclivities. We had a relaxed and quite agreeable conversation, unmarred by any attempt to trip me up. In the end he appeared to conclude that I must be sufficiently free of any of the grosser types of mental abnormality to be allowed loose on the Turkish highways, and I judged the interview to be concluded. But just as I was walking through the door, he called out from his desk, "By the way, Mr Ashenden, my wife went out to buy oranges this morning and got a dozen at three and a half kurus each; how much did they cost her?" It seemed almost like a foul to do this after the interview was over, but then from an alienist one must be prepared for anything. "Forty-two kurus," I replied. The alienist gave a laugh. "Good man! You got it right."

So Ashenden got through his medical.

My application to sit for the driving-tests and written exam. was now backed up by a document containing the written assent of the four doctors who had seen me, plus the head of the Hygiene Department. I was granted permission to sit for the exam. at 9 A.M. on 14th January.

Although I had been told that the U-bend course at the Police School was similar to the one I had been working on, it seemed only prudent to make a preliminary reconnaissance. So on the afternoon of the 13th, in the happy company of my fiancée H., who had arrived in Istanbul a few days previously, I went to the Police School.

The test course was behind high walls, but through a crack in a wooden door we saw an aged Austin creeping round a U which was disconcertingly unlike the one I had been working on. We were filled with concern. Wasting no time, we walked round to the main entrance of the Police School and asked to see the superintendent. The super. was a fine-looking man with greying hair and a resolute face. "What can I do for you?" he asked with a faint smile. "Well, I'm sitting for the exam. tomorrow," I replied, "and would like to ask your permission to reconnoitre the course." Mellowed perhaps by the sight of H.'s youthful beauty, and deferring to my black homburg and city-like appearance, the super. courteously accompanied us down the steps to the arena—it almost reminded me of a gladiatorial arena—where an aged Austin was slaloming its way through the sticks. Standing at a sort of royal box surveying the scene, the superintendent made an expansive gesture giving us the freedom of his demesne, and then called to a halt the moving car. The coach jumped out, stood almost at attention and awaited orders. "See that this gentleman gets taken round the course and is given some practice tonight." "On my head be it, sir," replied the coach.

The super. left, and H. and I went down to the arena. Certain homely touches began to strike us. Around the course were washing-lines, and the underwear of budding police constables festooned the north side of the enclosure. We noticed that long pants were worn. While somewhat distracting to the eye, the washing was not really such a physical hazard as the poultry that wandered round the U-bend itself—two turkeys, three cocks and several hens. H. was convulsed by the whole scene.

Affiliated to the Police School are a number of private instructor-coaches, and it is their vehicles that must be hired by candidates for the exam. All the cars are Austins; and most are in an advanced stage of decrepitude. The coach the super. had addressed said he would fetch a colleague to put me through the hoops that evening. About a quarter of an hour later he turned up with another little Austin and a second coach.

Meanwhile H. and I had paced

out the course and found certain differences in the angle, the gradients and the approach, as compared with the U-bend I was used to. When I got into the Austin with the coach of the Police School, I discovered that the engine only worked in fits and starts, and that the steering-wheel had a play of not less than ninety degrees. Against such heavy odds and the difficulties of the new course, my previously acquired expertise availed but little. Each attempt round the U-bend ended with posts knocked down and panic-stricken poultry flying in all directions. Darkness began to fall and there was nothing further to be done that day. H. sat glumly in the back with little hope left for my success on the morrow. "At least," she said, "if you are to fail, do it in the grand manner by mowing down all the posts, three cocks and a couple of police officers." I merely told the coach he would have to get me another car, and preferably another instructor, the next day, as it was impossible to use his vehicle.

That evening, to the accompaniment of icy gusts and battering rain, I sweated up for the last time the two hundred and one Articles of the Traffic Law. And on the morrow H. and I crossed the Bosphorus by an early ferry. We got into a taxi at the Galata Bridge and told the driver to take us to the "Police School, Examination Area." "Now let me give you a piece of advice, sir," said the taxi-man. "It rained all last night and the course will be in a shocking state. Be in no hurry to take your turn. Stand at the back of the queue and wait for the sun to dry it out. I've been through the thing myself and know some chaps who spent two years before they got it. It's the very devil when it's wet." We thanked the driver as he drew up at the wooden gate of the enclosure, and he wished me the best of luck.

Inside, an unforgettable scene met our eyes. High in his royal box stood the superintendent, arms folded, surveying the scene with regal composure. Down below, milling around in the mud, were twenty or twenty-five aged Austins with their owner-coaches and a motley array of candidates. Some of the Austins had no bonnets; some had no radiators and many were dented. At each end of the U-bend stood a phalanx of police, looking splendidly officious, with notebooks in hand, checking off the names of the candidates and preparing to record the details of the test.

I produced proof of my identity and was passed as present. A new coach was given to me, complete with car whose steering-wheel actually worked. He said he had a candidate who would go in before me, but that he would be at my disposal afterwards. This was welcome news, since it would provide for further delay.

The sun shone and a breeze fluttered the washing in the morning light. The candidates started their first run round the U, while H. and I watched intently. Soon enough there came the first failure, on the

hill brake-tests. One car slipped back onto the stake placed behind its tail, and the event was celebrated by a loud blast on a police-whistle. Another car mowed down three posts. But the survivors ploughed grimly on, nose to tail, inching round the bend. More failed on the backward turns. The thin fume of exhausts rose into the morning air.

Before the manœuvres round the U-bend, we noticed the coaches in earnest parley with their pupils. Admonitory signs and a flood of pep-talk were administered until the last possible moment; in fact, some coaches took things so far that they jumped on the fronts of their cars and hung on with a forefinger, encouraging and expostulating until the vehicle started up the incline of the U, when they would jump off with a laughing "May God give you strength."

Eventually my turn came. H. turned her face to the wall. "This is dreadful," she said. "I really can't stand it; shan't look. It might put you off."

I got into my Austin and prepared for the brake-test. Half-way up the incline a policeman lurking in wait gave the order to stop. A post was placed behind the vehicle. Then the policeman said, "Carry on." Letting in the clutch slowly, I pressed the accelerator, but without taking my heel off the footbrake. The car shuddered and a loud noise came from the engine. Then suddenly, with the back wheels skidding round, we were off. The impetus was so unexpected that I grazed a post at the actual bend of the U and came within a hairbreadth of disqualification. The post shook but did not fall. Calmer now, I slowed down to the one m.p.h., or less, at which experienced drivers of this course are wont to travel. Progress round the second bend of the U and down the descending incline along the arm of it was no problem. I had got through the first round. Three police officers with notebooks duly inscribed this fact on my card. The coach went up to H. with a smile of gratification.

Next was the forwards-to-the-left manœuvre. Crawling round at a snail's pace behind a line of other cars, I completed this without incident, and only one of our team was eliminated.

Harder stuff was to follow. The backwards-to-the-left manœuvre ploughed two more of our team, but by great good luck and infinitely slow driving I managed to overcome the subtle snares of this test. Three of the four manœuvres were now accomplished, and there remained only the hardest of all—the backwards to the right. Our police umpires allowed a short interval for regrouping and for pep-talks by the coaches.

My coach got into the Austin I was driving, and began a low earnest address. "Think nothing of it, my son. Relax and hold the wheel gently. I am going to give you special assistance on this test. You will pass it with ease, just like drawing a hair out of butter." He delved under the seat and produced

a bottle of the powerful Turkish spirit called 'Raki.' The initial idea this conjured up of an attempt to stupefy me with alcohol in preparation for the supreme trial, changed to puzzlement when I saw that the bottle was empty. "Now just listen to me," said the coach, as he positioned the bottle with very careful precision under the rear window. "You must jam your shoulders *hard* into the corner, turn your neck to the right and look straight at the Raki-bottle. When you get the *fourth* post up the incline of the U in alignment with the letter A on the bottle, you start swinging the wheel. Swing hard and keep swinging until you see all the posts of the base of the U in line ahead; then make your counterswing and slow down. Be careful; it's on the second bend that most pupils fail. But you won't. You can do it."

By now the candidates were mustering. The coach climbed out. "May God give you facility, my son." I glanced towards H., but saw only her back. She had turned her face to the wall again.

I started up the incline and was just about to put the bottle drill into practice when our line of cars was brought to a halt by some unfortunate in front who had demolished several posts, fore and aft, at the second bend. By the time the course was repaired and the man had extricated himself, a minute or two had passed. When we resumed motion I forgot about the Raki-bottle, and gazing grimly at the line of posts put the Austin at them at a speed well in excess of the snail's crawl adopted by the more decorous members of our convoy. At the second bend I grazed a post with the near front wheel. The post teetered but stayed up. Then with tremendous satisfaction I roared backwards down the finishing straight.

As I climbed out I saw H. surrounded by a bevy of anonymous males, police officers, taxi-drivers' fiancées, and in fact most of the onlookers of the arena, vociferously congratulating her, or with genuine delight trying to shake her hand. It was a great day for H.! My coach leapt onto the car. "Well done!" he said; "I never doubted it. Now you have the parking-test and the road-test. But they are as nothing compared to what you have just performed."

As a matter of fact the parking-test was hard: in some ways it called for as much judgment as the U-bend, and the tolerances were small.

But the road-test amounted to nothing much. It was conducted in the hilly, wooded grounds of the Police School; none of the umpires was going to be so foolhardy as to let the neophytes loose on the open streets of Istanbul. My coach drove the car to the start of the road-test course, then got out and handed over the wheel to me. A police officer and a road engineer got in, officiously waving notebooks. "Start," they said; then "Accelerate." I went through the gears and revved up to a respectable velocity until we came to a blind corner in thick trees; I was horrified to see there another

car turned upside down against a tree, smoking slightly. "Pay no attention," said the police officer. "The chap made a mess of it." It was a remarkably cool statement of the obvious, but I thought it best to ask no questions. At least the driver had secured disqualification in the grand manner.

We turned the corner smartly, climbed a hill, then forked to the left and descended a steep slope. "That will do," said the police officer. "Your circuit is ended. You may now present yourself for the written examination at three P.M."

Lunchtime had arrived, and H. and I sat on a bench in the sun and ate sandwiches. The coach came up to say good-bye and be paid off. "My work is done now," he said. "There is nothing else I can help you over. Keep a clear brain for the writing work."

At three of the afternoon about forty candidates, muffled in overcoats and scarves, filed into the examination hall to give proof of their identity and be checked off. Ancient school desks filled the room. The temperature was glacial. There was absolutely no heating. Underneath the blackboard stood a large table with three police invigilators. When everyone was seated, the senior invigilator got up and addressed us in the most overbearing tones. One felt like a very junior fag up before the 'beak.'

"There will be no talking in this exam.," he said. "And no guile or trickery. Anyone who so much as utters a whisper will be chucked out. Now listen to the rules. There are a hundred examination papers in front of me. All are in sealed envelopes. All have different questions. Inside the sealed envelopes, and with the questions, are sheets of numbered and certified paper. You will answer your questions on the numbered sheets, and in indelible pencil. There will be no scratching out. Each answer must be numbered, and after the number you will put a dash. Not a full stop; if you put a full stop I shall disqualify you. Remember that. As I call your names out, you will come up one by one and select your envelopes, then you will return straight to your desks. You will not break the seals of your envelopes until everyone has secured his paper. Then I shall give the signal to start, on my whistle. You'll have one hour flat."

I was filled with admiration for the system. In a part of the world where the foiling of adventitious aids to success at exams. is a major preoccupation of all school authorities, the Police School seemed to have come up with the foolproof answer. There would certainly be no guile or trickery here. The hundred different exam. papers obviously covered every aspect of the mechanical and Traffic Law courses, and even if a candidate had seen them all before, he would still have to know his stuff perfectly in order to be sure of answering any random-selected paper correctly.

When the whistle blew we all broke open our envelopes. The room was filled with a crackle of

paper. Then absolute silence descended. You could almost hear the whirr of mental counters turning over, as the whole roomful got to grips with the questions.

My first was, 'Describe the ignition system of a petrol engine. In what ways does this differ from that of a Diesel engine?' This was 'kid stuff' for a graduate of the Fikri Tan Academy for budding drivers; but there were harder ones to follow. One was, 'Describe the mechanism by which it is possible for an engine to idle, and say what changes occur when the accelerator pedal is depressed.' The hardest questions demanded a list of the parts involved in the particular section of the car referred to, together with a description of what defects they might be liable to, and how these defects could be put right.

Fortunately the course I had done was adequate to allow me to cope with such conundrums, and I was able to answer the mechanical questions quite rapidly.

Next was the Traffic Law section of the exam. I found this harder. And the legalistic expressions were oppressive. In an agglutinating tongue such as Turkish, the wealth of qualifying suffixes is apt to become bewildering in the written language. Some of the questions I found impossible to answer; but fortunately candidates only had to reply to five out of seven. In the end I found I would have to attempt an answer to my special *bête noire* conundrum, which appeared like a Cerberus at the bottom of the paper. It was, 'Define the circumstances in which one can become involved in a traffic accident without actually hitting or touching another car or person.' The answer to this runs to many lines of closely-packed legalese. To this day I have never understood it fully. And even my instructor at the Fikri Tan School had not been able to enlighten me. By dint of intense cerebration I managed to recollect word for word the first three lines of the answer. The rest was beyond me. Writing down a lot more text, mostly gibberish, but with occasional patches of the authorised reply, I completed a veritable essay on the subject, and hoped the police authorities could understand it better than I did; I hoped in fact that they would put down my obscurity of expression to pardonable weakness in a language that was not my own.

Little more remains to be said.

A few days later I visited the Sixth Section of Police; and with much the same feelings as I had before the war when given the award of an honorary scholarship at Rugby, I saw my name up on the list of successful candidates in all five sections of the exam.

EVAN MORGAN COMES HOME

BY L. P. DAVIES

THERE is only the one main street in Llandwy, and it stretches the length of the village, from the tiny railway station at one end to the cross-roads at the other. Where the road divides, with one way swinging up into the mountains and the other to Pentir and the Llewr valley below, a narrow hump-backed bridge spans the brown stream of mountain water, which bends at a right-angle before running parallel to the street.

Beyond the bridge, and standing alone, so that it looks as if it had only been added as an afterthought, is the red-brick cube of the chapel. A little way beyond again is the low, ugly corrugated-iron building which served as a chapel in the days before the present one was erected. We call it the tin chapel, and it serves as a kind of village hall: Sunday-school is held there, and the annual flower-show. At Christmas-time it becomes the theatre for our pantomime, and once it was the headquarters of the local Home Guard.

It has seen better days, and the iron walls have rusted and scarred into holes. The green paint has faded and peeled, and in parts the roof is secured against wind with huge flat slabs of purple slate. It is the only eyesore in Llandwy.

I remember that on my first day in the village, when Roberts Poliss escorted me through the winding streets, I unthinkingly expressed an opinion about its dilapidated appearance. He stroked his chin where the helmet-strap bit deeply into the flesh, and eyed me reproachfully.

"Don't be letting Rhys Jones Parson hear you say that," said he. "Pretty it may not be in a stranger's eyes, but very useful for all that."

I heeded the warning, and subsequently kept my peace when later introduced to Mr Rhys Jones. He was tall and bleak, with thick black hair, equally thick bushy brows and a way of bending his gaze so that each time he moved his head I could almost feel the swinging beam of his eyes.

Across the road from the old tin chapel stands the house with the grey-and-yellow stuccoed front. On that first day when Roberts Poliss had industriously filled my bewildered head with masses of information, I asked about the old house. We had gone to stand by the rusted and broken wrought-iron gates that led to the melancholy weed-covered drive, and he busied himself straightening the 'For Sale. Apply Hughes & Broderick' sign that stood wind-drunken by the gate, while he told me its story.

The place was called Bryn Llewr. I thought it a grand name, and searched my recently-acquired knowledge of Welsh for the translation. I came up with '*Bryn*' all right—I had already asked the landlord of the Bryn Mawr, the local pub, about that, and he had explained '*Bryn*,' a view, '*Mawr*,' big. All very clear and straightforward. I came unstuck a little later when Williams Chemist had been talking about his daughter. He called her a *merch fawr*. I knew that '*merch*' was the Welsh for girl or daughter, but I was lost with '*fawr*.'

'*Fawr*,' he told me, was big—the same as '*mawr*.' That was my first introduction to the intricacies of mutations. It was one of the reasons why I decided to forgo the pleasure of learning the language.

Bryn Llewr was the largest and oldest house in Llandwy. It had been built by a Manchester business-man in the Victorian days of prosperous landowners to serve as a shooting-lodge-cum-week-end residence. But with his passing, the place had become something of a white elephant, and had remained unoccupied.

"When I first came to Llandwy," Roberts Poliss told me, "it had stood empty for a long time. Looking very miserable it was too, and me having work on my hands in keeping children from breaking fences and smashing windows."

He went on to tell me then about the coming of Idris Morgan and his two sons. A widower, Idris had bought the place and turned it into a market-garden, using help from the village until his sons became old enough to play their part. Then the war had come, and with it some measure of prosperity. Because they were engaged in the production of food, both Rhyn the elder and Evan the younger son were exempted from military service.

But then things started to change. Two seasons of bad weather with the winds damaging the green-houses, and late frosts taking the blossom, reduced them to living off their capital. In the winter of '45, a night of fierce winds took the entire top from their largest glass-house, and they could not afford to have it repaired.

"And that," Roberts told me as we walked up the drive, "was when the rot really set in. Evan ups and tells his father that he is away to sea. 'Not enough money coming in to keep us all going,' says he. 'Another year like this last one and we will all be seeking work elsewhere. Better it is if only the two of you left, and a fair chance of keeping the place going. Money I will send as soon as I am able.'"

Mr Roberts pushed the unlocked front door open, and we wandered with echoing footsteps through large high-ceilinged rooms.

"That would be in '46," he ruminated. "And Idris telling us all that Evan had deserted him, using any excuse to get away. Swearing, he was, never to have anything more to do with Evan."

"A hard man," Mr Roberts continued. "Proud and difficult for even we of the village to be understanding.

Too proud to admit defeat. But Rhyn too was seeing the way of things, and he gets work in the slate-quarries, and helps in the gardens at night and each week-end.

"But before he has been in the quarries for more than a year there is an accident, and he is taken to hospital at Bangor with a broken leg. He never came home again; for there was a disease of the bone—long words were used which I can't remember. They buried him at Pentir in the valley."

We walked through the house and came out onto a terrace at the back. The stones were moss-covered and crumbling, the broken steps led to a wilderness of wild briar and gnarled trees, deep in coarse desolate grass.

"Idris sold the place then," Roberts told me, "and went to live in the valley. There is a cottage that stands alone just beyond the big farm. I often stop to have a word with him on my way to Pentir."

I rested my hands on the crumbling balustrade. "It's been empty ever since?" I asked.

"An Englishman bought it, but he didn't live here for more than a year. He put it up for sale, and that's how it is to this very day. Empty now for ten years or so."

We turned and went back through the dusty corridors.

"And no news of Evan?" I asked as he closed the front door behind us.

"Never a word," said Roberts Poliss; and then, as if tired of the subject, "Now I'll take you to meet Come off it Cullis."

I forgot my interest in Bryn Llewr in the discovery of a new name. Mr Roberts was mildly surprised that I was curious about the origins of a name like Come off it Cullis. He seemed to think it quite an ordinary sort of title. But he pandered to my curiosity and told me the story.

When Mr Cullis, a young and enthusiastic teacher, fresh from the university, had first come to Llandwy, he had been appalled at the lack of classical knowledge among his pupils. The discovery that Shakespeare was a closed book to them had set him thinking how best to introduce the subject. He decided that the play was the thing.

In the first optimistic glow he envisaged a mammoth production of Henry V. in the village hall, but in the end he had to settle for brief excerpts to be rendered at the Christmas concert.

The *pièce de résistance* was to be 'Friends, Romans, Countrymen,' and one Willy Vaughan was to deliver the speech. Not because Willy showed the most histrionic promise, but because his doting mother happened to be Mr Cullis's landlady, and the underpaid Mr Cullis was a fortnight behind with the rent. Pressure, as it were, had been brought to bear.

He rehearsed the reluctant Willy from July onwards. When the great moment arrived the curtain rose on Willy, resplendent in a borrowed table-cloth, his nose built up with plasticine, shivering against a background of corrugated-paper pillars.

"Friends . . ." Willy offered the waiting audience. Then he dried up.

"*Romans*," Mr Cullis whispered fiercely from the prompt-corner.

"Romans . . ." Willy quavered, rapping his knees together.

"*Countrymen*," Mr Cullis prompted in a louder voice.

"Countrymen . . ." said Willy, throwing anguished glances into the wings.

"Lend me your ears!" Mr Cullis bellowed, and reached out a long arm to drag his leading man from the glare of the footlights. "Come off it!" he shouted.

That was the end of an experiment, the christening of the schoolmaster, and new lodgings for Mr Cullis.

The story of Bryn Llewr was told to me nearly three years ago now. I had since met Idris Morgan and found him to be as Mr Roberts said, "A proud and hard man."

The first time I walked down the valley to Pentir I noticed the big farm, and so was ready for the cottage that stood beyond it. I was admiring the garden—beautifully kept; lavender-bushes that put those in my own garden to shame; stocks, hollyhocks, and a mass of lupins—when the little white door opened and Mr Morgan came out to speak to me.

He looked younger than I had expected—I would have put his age at fifty if I had not known that he had passed the sixty mark. He was tall, almost patriarchal in appearance, with a mane of white hair, a long cadaverous face, and deep-set, fierce dark eyes. He wore a neat, blue serge suit, and a flowing blue-spotted handkerchief instead of a tie.

We spoke, I remember, about the weather and the long drought. All the while his eyes were on Llandwy, the other side of the valley, perched high on its ridge. He was unsmiling and stern, and when I made some fatuous remark comparing the quality of the flowers in my garden to those in his, there was not a flicker of amusement or understanding in his eyes.

Going back up the valley, and climbing the winding road to Llandwy, I thought about Rhyn who was buried in Pentir, and Evan who had left home to become a sailor. I wondered what had happened to the Welshman who had deserted the land for the sea.

After the long dry summer, first the rain came, and then the wind, hurtling in icy, salt-laden blasts into the funnel of the mountains, bringing trees toppling, and laying fences to the ground.

The Christmas pantomime was held as usual, and a fortnight later came the night of the fiercest gales of all. They brought down the Red Dragon sign from its high post outside the Bryn Mawr, and part of the roof of the old tin chapel was torn from its rotted moorings to be flung, a tangled mass, into the field behind.

The following morning, with Mab Morgan, the brown-faced quarry-man who had become my particular friend in Llandwy, I went along to see what damage the night had brought. And so we came upon a bleak and unhappy Rhys Jones Parson, and little Madoc Price, the dour village handy-

man, inspecting the ruins of the tin chapel.

Madoc, busy with pencil-stub and the back of an old envelope, had been converting the damage into figures. As we neared them Rhys Jones called us over, inviting us to share in his gloom.

" All of fifty pounds, Madoc here is telling us," he mourned. " And only for new supports and three sheets of tin. Wicked, it is. . . ."

" Sheets of iron and supports," Madoc retorted, becoming briskly informative. " Struts as well it is wanting now, and fair play, but the rest of the roof to come down if I even put hammer to it. At fifty pounds," he pointed out, stubbing furiously with his pencil, "I'm robbing myself, and only doing it for the sake of the chapel."

" But fifty, man," Rhys Jones protested, his shoulders quivering, " when place was built costing only forty-five, and receipts I can be showing to prove it."

" And how long ago would that be ? " Madoc asked coldly.

Rhys Jones blew heavily through his nose. " Some time, certainly," he admitted grudgingly, " before the war."

Madoc snorted indignantly. " And which war will that be ? " he asked drily. " Telling you that 1911 was the date, and forty-five then worth a fortune today."

Rhys Jones looked at his feet while Madoc put his estimate in writing. He offered the minute scrap of paper to the parson, then went on his way.

" Fifty," Rhys Jones brooded absently, his mind obviously racing ahead. " We've had a sale of work and it's too early for a flower-show. Now what. . . ." He relapsed into a lip-fingering silence, and Mab winked heavily at me.

" There's thinking that without tin chapel there's nothing you can do to raise money to have it repaired," he said, " unless you are having the work done on tick and paying for it afterwards."

" Unless," I added, entering into the spirit of the thing, " you hold a lottery."

We had gone quite a distance on our way before Rhys Jones woke up.

" A lottery ? " he called after us. " Now that's something we've never had."

" *Diawch*," Mab breathed in my ear, " and why can't you be keeping bright ideas to yourself. Knowing well who will be monkey now. . . ."

" Oh, Mr Morgan," the parson called in dulcet tones, " can I have a word with you ? "

That was in the morning. In the afternoon I went along to the station to see Evans the Signals who had promised me some forsythia cuttings. The 4.32 from Bangor was just pulling out as I climbed the hollow wooden steps that led to the platform, and a stranger stood there alone, looking out over Llandwy.

He was very broad, and had a neatly trimmed black beard. His face was so bronzed and weather-beaten that it was hard to assess his age. There was a huge duffle-bag at his feet, and because he wore a black peaked cap with a badge on the front,

thick black gloves and a heavy serge suit with a blue woollen jersey, I decided that he must be a sailor. And thinking that, so a name came to my mind.

He nodded to me, and smiled. Then he picked up his bag and came along the platform. He walked with a gait that was almost a roll, as though one leg was a fraction shorter than the other.

"*Shw'mai?*" he greeted me, his teeth white against teak. He was Welsh, certainly, but the common expression came awkwardly from his lips.

"The old Bryn Mawr," he said; "is it still here?"

I felt that he had only asked the question to tell me he was no stranger to the village. "It's still here," I told him, and he touched his cap in a gesture that was purely nautical, and swung away down the steps into the street.

Evans the Signals brought my cuttings wrapped in a piece of newspaper, and stood by my side, looking after the man in the thick blue suit and peaked cap.

"A stranger to you?" I said.

He looked thoughtful. "Iss. But all the same, there's a feeling that...."

"Evan Morgan from Bryn Llewr?" I suggested, and he slapped his thigh.

"*Dhuw*," said he, "that's the name I was seeking."

For once I was before Mab in knowing some titbit of information. When he saw me in the Bryn Mawr that evening, he worked his way to my side.

"New face in the village," he began.

"Surely not," I said happily. "An old face returned."

"You've heard," he said reproachfully.

"I've met him," said I.

"Taken lodgings with old Gwan," he told me over the top of his tankard. "Paying good money, she says, and helping her now with her post-offiss pension."

"I wonder why he's come back?" I said.

Mab set down his tankard with elaborate care. The room had suddenly become quiet.

"I wouldn't be knowing," he said slowly. "There's changed he is since he went away, but that only to be expected in one who has sailed to foreign countries. He was asking about his father, and I told him that there was little hope of a welcome there. I set him on his way to the cottage, and he asked me to drop in at Gwan's place later this evening, and have a chat about the old times."

"You know what happened, and why he left home?" Mab asked me.

I nodded.

"I know that he went away to sea very soon after the war," I said, "and that his father was upset."

"Upset...?" He looked round the faces that were watching us. "*Diawch* . . . that's one way of describing it."

He produced three little books from the pocket of his corduroys and slapped them on the zinc countertop. "Now this is all your doing,"

he said, and used as I was to his habit of suddenly changing the topic, I was lost for a moment, still with Evan Morgan and his proud father.

"A hundred in each," he said sadly. "And at half a crown a time."

It was not until I had picked up one of the books and riffled through its pink numbered pages that I understood.

"Mr Rhys Jones . . ." I said, "a lottery?"

He sighed, his face buried in his tankard.

"He's worked it all out," said Mab, and pushed his blue cloth cap to the back of his black curls. "Three hundred at half a dollar will bring in enough with what he's got in hand. . . ."

"What sort of prizes have you got?" I said; then, "Half a crown—each?"

He laid his elbows on the counter and sank his chin in the rough cloth of his sleeves. His steel-rimmed spectacles threatened to fall from the tip of his nose.

"Prizes?" he said sadly. "There aren't any. 'Buy the tickets,' Rhys Jones tells me, 'and heaven will provide the prizes.'"

"He's very trusting," I murmured. I am not a regular chapel-goer, not because I have no leanings towards religion, but because an hour-long sermon in Welsh leaves me singularly untouched.

"By 'heaven,'" Mab explained with the weight of past experience, "he means the village in general and me in particular."

As the originator of the lottery idea, I cast round in my mind for something which I could offer as a prize to set the ball rolling. In my younger days I had fancied myself as an artist. On the wall of my cottage hung a painting from that period. I had never much cared for it.

"I have a painting," I said, "nicely framed. . . ?"

"I know," Mab said quickly, "I've seen it. Any more suggestions? Plenty of time," he added. "Madoc saying at least three months before he can be getting the metal to start work."

He looked at the bottle-flanked clock above the tarnished mirror, and drained his tankard.

"Care to come with me to Gwan's cottage?" he asked me. "I don't fancy going by myself."

I agreed: it would be interesting to meet the prodigal son. A thought came to me at the door. Mab Morgan—Evan Morgan.

"Is he any relation to you, Mab?" I asked.

He looked surprised, and I realised that like many other Welshmen I have met, the fact that somebody has the same name as themselves always seems to come as a surprise when it is pointed out.

"Relation . . .?" he repeated, "*Dhuw*, no."

I always felt at home in the parlour of Gwan's little cottage. It was bright and cheerful, with gay chintz curtains and fresh chair-covers. The mantelpiece and side-board were filled with polished copper

and brass—pin-trays, horse-shoes, candlesticks and jugs.

I sat on the window-seat, my favourite perch; for through the diamond panes I could look right out over the green Llewr valley to the mountain slopes beyond. The river itself was a silver ribbon, the fields squares of warm brown. The mountains were rich in their winter coat of red and purple bracken.

Mab was on one side of the fire, and Evan Morgan, legs stretched the length of the worn woollen rug, on the other. Gwan, her round face alive with exertion and pride in her new lodger, bustled about with a great clinking of cups.

"Proud?" Evan said. "There's no understanding it. Only half a dozen words did I get to say to him. 'Hello, Da,' I says. 'Here I am, back from . . .' and before I can get another word out he's lamming into me and showing me the door. No son of his, he tells me; a deserter, leaving him in the lurch when he wanted all the help he could. As if I were to know what was to happen to Rhyn. And then he gives me a wad of money. All the money I've sent over the years, and not a penny he'd touched. 'Not wanting charity,' he tells me. . . . *Dhuw*. What can a man be doing with a father like that?"

Gwan paused in her work to offer sympathetic clicks, and Mab nodded as much as to say, 'I knew all the time that that's how it would be.'

"And what will you do now, Evan?" he asked.

"This is my home," Evan Morgan said. "I've come back, and I'm staying."

"I suppose," Mab said, "there's much of the world you've seen on your travels?"

Evan did not reply. His head was sunk on his chest, and his eyes stared into the fire. Gwan had to touch his arm to tell him the tea was ready.

During the next few weeks I got used to seeing Evan in the village. He had made himself quite at home with old Gwan, and still kept to his peaked cap and blue jersey. Always he walked with his legs apart, as if straddling the deck of some invisible ship.

And then, one morning, a car came up the valley road and stopped outside Bryn Llewr. A tall and efficient-looking gentleman with a huge wad of papers under one arm got out, wrenched up the 'For Sale' notice, and was gone with it protruding from the boot of the car before anyone could say a word to him.

We waited for signs of the new tenants, but except for the gaping hole left by the uprooted post, the old place remained empty and unchanged.

It was round about this time that Mab began to grow anxious about the lottery. He had accumulated as prizes, so he told me, a packet of ten cigarettes, a miniature bottle of whisky, and a goffering-iron.

"A what?" I asked of the last item. He explained that it was a pair of tongs used for curling the frills that the Welsh people wear

under the old-fashioned tall beaver hats.

"No home should be without one," I said facetiously, but he was not amused.

Evan put in an appearance then, and Mab recited his pathetic list again.

"And that's the best you can do?" Evan asked cheerfully; and when Mab nodded, "There's things I've brought back with me—you're welcome to look at them, and if there's anything you can use, then pleased to give them to help the chapel."

I went with them both to Gwan's cottage, and Evan produced his duffle-bag and set it on the rug in front of the fire.

Mab crouched on his haunches and crooned his pleasure at a glittering, half-curved blade with a carved handle.

"From Malaya," Evan told us, and produced a small wooden idol. "From Sumatra," he said. "Now that might be of use?"

Mab shook his head. "Very strict is Rhys Jones," said he. "Not taking kindly to a heathen idol being used to mend tin chapel."

Evan shrugged, and dug deeper into his bag.

"*Dhuw* . . ." Mab breathed at the next exhibit, and took it into his hands.

It was a head—a shrunken head about the size of an orange, with a long and horribly straggling beard. The lips were sewn tightly together with rough stitches of some thick black thread, with one end dangling like a string of viscid saliva. The wizened face was inexpressively evil. I had seen pictures of such things, but this was the first time I had seen one in the flesh, as it were. It was repulsive.

"*Dhuw*," Mab said again, "and what would this be? A child's toy from some foreign country?"

Evan leaned back and pointed his beard to the ceiling. He had a hearty open-air laugh.

"A head it is," he said at length. "A human head shrunken with hot sand and stones, and the bones taken out piece by piece through the nose."

Mab dropped the head and recoiled, his face filled with horror.

"But a fake it is," Evan explained, having enjoyed the effect of his explanation, "and knowing that when I was buying. Made up for tourists, and I only bought it for a curiosity."

Mab overcame his repugnance enough to pick it up again. He seemed to find a morbid fascination in the shrivelled malignant face.

When we left Evan's lodgings, Mab carried a large paper parcel containing two daggers, a carved coconut, an ornament made from shells, a carved piece of ebon wood, which Evan had told us was a ju-ju, and the shrunken head.

At the gate, Evan put his hand on Mab's arm.

"One more thing I can give you for the chapel," he said. "Not offering it inside, because thinking it best kept between ourselves who is giving it."

He put a large envelope into Mab's free hand. Mab gave it to me and I opened it, holding the sheet of

parchment paper so that I could read it in the light from the open door.

"What will it be?" Mab asked cheerfully, happy in the ownership of prizes for the raffle; "a map of buried treasure?"

"In a way," I told him, watching Evan's face. "It's the title-deeds to Bryn Llewr."

"I bought the house to give to my father," Evan explained, "but never a chance I had to offer it to him. But even if I had, he would have called it charity. No use to me now, so let it be put to the good of the village."

He nodded, wished us good-night, and went back into the cottage. As we walked along, I explained to Mab that the paper he carried was the bricks and stone, the trees and soil of Bryn Llewr.

He spoke softly to himself in Welsh, my presence forgotten.

"A house—the old house—as first prize in a raffle?" he said at last.

"It's all yours," I told him. "There's just a question of legal formalities. . . ."

He stayed silent and thoughtful until we reached the converted smithy where he lived with Bessie his wife.

"Time needed for me to think," he told me at the door. "Asking you not to be talking to others about this for a while."

I said that I had no intention of breathing a word.

"And fair play now, but to raffle a house like a—a box of chocolates is not a good thing." He looked over my shoulder to where the dark peaks of the mountains melted into the still darker sky. "A house is more than bricks and stone; there's love and hate and fear. There's memories and hopes. . . ."

I had never seen him in such a mood. His eyes were shining and his small face animated with emotion. I remember that when I got back to my cottage, I even sat a while mulling over the things he had said. I supposed that there must be a poet buried in every Welshman, even if he does wear corduroys and steel-rimmed spectacles, and work in a slate-quarry.

And later, as I lay in bed, I found myself trying to put a value on the old grey-and-yellow house in the trees. It was in poor condition certainly, but there was land—how many acres I did not know. Three thousand pounds?—four? Probably more. I wondered where Evan Morgan had got that sort of money from.

The next morning was unusually mild, with a touch of spring. There was a light mist in the valley, and thin feathers of cloud had wrapped themselves round the tallest peaks. I went to the old bridge and leaned on the wall. Across the road, the empty windows of Bryn Llewr were bright in the morning sun. The trees and bushes, thickly clustered like an invading army against the mellowed walls, hid much of the imperfection of broken masonry and warped window-frames. It looked a very inviting house; it looked a very lonely house.

As I leaned on the wall, Evan Morgan came swinging along the

road and, seeing me, put up his hand, then hoisted himself to the low wall by my side.

"I was born in a small place called Talwrn, on the Island," said he. "Farmers we were, but when Mam died, Da came to Llandwy. Only kids then were Rhyn and I. All the happiness of youth that I can remember is in the walls and gardens of Bryn Llewr. Only bad luck it was that the market-garden failed with the weather we had, and there no money left to keep it going. Acted as I thought for the best. . . . If only Rhyn had stayed well. . . ."

"I know the story," I told him. "I'm sorry about what happened."

"Then let me be putting an end to it for you," he said, and dragged a black briar pipe from his pocket. He cradled it in his hands while he spoke, turning it over and over, scraping at the bowl with a large and horny finger-nail.

"I went to Liverpool and I tried to get a job on a ship. Three months I tried, but it was a bad time, with the end of the war, and many ships being laid aside. Only sailors with experience were wanted, they told me, but work on the docks, and good money being paid."

He fell silent for a while, then:

"I wanted to go to sea," he said softly. "I wanted to feel salt spray on my face, and see strange lands. And me a farmer, born to the land—now there's strange for you. . . ."

"There was a pirate once," I told him. "He was a Welshman, and his name was Morgan, too."

"So I worked on the docks," he continued, ignoring my interruption, "I worked hard, all hours that God sends. Each week I posted off money to my father—the same money which he threw back at me when I went to see him."

"So you never went to sea at all?"

"There was a hawser," he said. "A thing of steel and rope. There was a boat that shifted with the tide, so that the hawser strained and parted, and was flung back like a lash from a whip."

He put one hand on his knee and lifted the thick blue material of his trousers so that I could see the thing of leather and metal that was his leg.

"They—the Company—admitted negligence, the hawser was old, and should have been discarded. They offered me compensation. I took it, thinking that if in the past I had taken my two hands from helping my father, now I could bring back a leg, and try and make things right again.

"When I saw the house was still for sale, I bought it with the money from compensation. Then, with the paper in my hand, I went down to the cottage in the valley. But this time the door remained closed in my face. He was there, for I could see through the window. But he would not open.

"Pride," he said slowly, "is a terrible thing. I saw his face through the window, and his eyes told me that he was wanting us to be together again. But his face remained stern and without smile. What can man do to break down such a pride? It runs in my blood too; for ashamed

to come back home and tell that I had been only a labourer on the docks, and not a sailor as I had promised when I left. The trinkets that I gave to Mab were but a part of the pretence."

I found no words to say, and we sat silently, looking at the old house.

Mab came along the road, whistling happily.

"Tonight the draw," he called as he came abreast. "At the Bryn Mawr. Please be coming, and asking you to pass the news on to the others."

"Tonight?" I said, in some surprise. "You mean you've sold all the tickets?"

He winked, and went on his way, over the bridge and down into the valley.

I had long ago given up trying to fathom the workings of Mab's mind. All I did know was that he had not tried to sell me a single ticket, and, so far as I knew, nobody in the village had bought one.

The draw was timed to take place at six, and I arrived at the Bryn Mawr at quarter to. The hotel itself was packed, and quite a few of the villagers had overflowed into the forecourt. I sat on the old horse-trough and smoked a cigarette.

There was no excitement; it might have been a funeral. But then I know that the Welsh *en masse* are usually undemonstrative. With the one exception of the Rugby international, especially when Wales is playing England and licking the pants off the English side.

And then, as six o'clock approached, Idris Morgan, hard black hat on his white hair, a thick walking-stick under his arm, came into the cobbled yard. He nodded to me, exchanged brief greetings with some of the villagers, then went to stand in a corner, his arms folded over his stick.

Mab and Rhys Jones carried a table and set it in the centre of the forecourt. The parson paused to offer his hand to Idris Morgan, and Mab stood smiling while the little ceremony was enacted.

Then a small wooden box was placed on the table, Rhys Jones coughed for silence, and the people gathered round.

"I have to thank you for the great support you have given," the parson announced. "Exceeding all expectations, and now asking Mr Mab Morgan to be telling us the result."

Mab cleared his throat, adjusted his spectacles, and read from a scrap of paper.

"Thirty-seven pounds, seven and sixpence I have handed to Mr Rhys Jones. All tickets sold except one. As a gesture to Mr Idris Morgan, who has come to join us to-day, I am asking him to accept with my compliments this last ticket. Number twenty-seven it is."

I stubbed out my cigarette, and watched Mab's face closely. I had a feeling that the next few minutes would decide the fate of Bryn Llewr.

Mab offered the little pink slip of paper to the stern unbending figure in the corner. For a moment Idris Morgan stared back at him, then, resting his stick against the wall, he

produced a long black purse from his pocket.

"Not holding with lotteries," he said bleakly, "and only coming up here to-day because Mab Morgan telling me that there is important work on hand concerning the chapel. I will take the ticket, but I will pay for it. Charity I have never accepted, not from any man, and charity I never will accept."

I could see from Mab's face that things were working out according to plan. Evan came to stand by me, one hand resting on his artificial leg. "There's something afoot," he breathed, "feeling it in my bones."

Rhys Jones put his hand in the wooden box, and the crowd fell silent again. It was almost as if they knew that there was more afoot than just a draw. He stirred round in the box, then held up the folded piece of paper.

"This will be the winning number," said he, unfolding it.

"Twenty-seven," he announced, and his voice was surprised, "Twenty-seven has won the first prize, and still fresh in our minds who holds that ticket."

The applause rose and died away.

"Mab tells me," the parson continued, "that he has kept the information about the first prize as a secret. He has only told us that it is something old, unusual, and very valuable. It could be almost anything, even myself. . . ." He paused for the anticipated laughter, and when none was forthcoming, "And now I will ask him to divulge this mysterious secret."

I had a good idea of what was to come, and because I felt I had no part in it, still being a 'foreigner,' I moved from my seat to stand right at the back of the crowd.

I heard Mab tell them about the house and I saw him give the envelope into Idris Morgan's reluctant fingers. I heard Rhys Jones's voice raised above the babble of Welsh, "Welcome home, Mr Morgan," and I saw Evan go to his father's side.

They spoke together, and as I came away, I saw Idris rest his arm on the broad shoulders of his son.

My clock had just finished striking ten when Mab came knocking on the door. He sat in my favourite easy-chair, and knocked the dottle from his pipe against the fire-bars.

I waited while he refilled from a worn leather pouch, ramming in the rich thick flakes with a calloused thumb.

"Idris and Evan to open up old house again," he told the fire.

"Yes?" I asked.

"Worried about that piece of paper, burning my fingers each time I touched it. Not right that such a thing should be gambled like a bottle of whisky. Devil's own job I had persuading old Idris to come to the draw, only by telling him that parson had asked for him to be there did I get him to come."

"And the draw itself?" I asked. "Quite a coincidence that he should draw the winning number."

"Writer's cramp I have," he grinned, his eyes black beads in the

flickering light. "Not since I left school have I done so much writing. Three hundred times, or thereabouts, I have written numbers on paper, and all the same one." He winked. "Dull it was, writing twenty-seven all those many times."

"And the rest of the tickets?"

"Not a one sold," he told me. "Trying hard, mind you, but fair play, when I am telling that first prize a secret, and then showing the old shrunken head, nobody seeming over-keen to be buying."

I digested this; then, as another thought came:

"And the money you gave to Rhys Jones?"

"Now there's inquisitive you are," said he reproachfully, "and only Mrs Lloyd Post Offiss knowing that I was drawing it from my bank."

I remembered that it was my chance remark that had started off the draw in the first place, and I felt rather guilty.

"I'll make up half of it for you," I offered.

"No need for that, and thanking you all the same. But Evan there catching on quicker than I could explain to him, and saying that the fifty he is giving me is a small price to pay for being back with his father in Bryn Llewr."

"Fifty?" I asked, and he had the grace to look ashamed.

"Well, fair play," he said. "That was what the repairs were to cost, as I was telling Evan. And a chance I was taking in trying to break Idris's pride. If plan not working then having to pay for tin chapel myself."

'CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!'

BY A. G. H.

"ALLOW me to congratulate you, m'sieur," said the doctor, ushering Jill out of the consulting-room. "You can expect the birth to take place in early September."

At least he didn't say that. He said it in French, but that was what he meant.

September. It was now the end of January and we were in Tahiti. Because we wanted our first child to be born in England we should have to do some quick thinking. Quick moving too. There were innumerable snags to be overcome; but the first one, and the most immediate, the doctor might be able to help us with.

"*M'sieur*," I began, in creaking schoolboy French. "*Croyez-vous qu'il serait possible pour madame faire une grande voyage dans un tout petit bateau â voile?*" The voyage, I added, would be six or eight weeks in longness.

The doctor seemed taken aback, so we judged that this was not among the questions he reckoned on being asked by prospective parents. He thought for a little while and then put his finger on the nub of the problem by asking:

"To where would you sail then, in this small boat?"

And we found ourselves completely floored. For, after all, where on earth *would* we sail to? The choice was a wide one, and we had already considered such diverse possibilities as Auckland, Sydney, Hawaii and Los Angeles.

"We don't know yet," we replied rather feebly, feeling it was most unfair to be invited to tie ourselves down to mere navigational detail before we had even had a chance to become used to the idea of parenthood.

"Well, all I can say to you, then," said the doctor doubtfully, "is that madame *might* make such a voyage. But it would surely be wiser for her to travel in the steamship."

That's what we'd thought he would say, and in the circumstances it wasn't much help. For one thing there was a three-month waiting-list for passages in the steamship, and we had neither the money nor the inclination to sit in Tahiti all that time.

We asked a few further questions, and the doctor must have realised that madame was in a 'to-hell-with-steamships' frame of mind; for he soon relaxed his professional air, shook us both warmly by the hand

and, as he ushered us into the blinding midday glare of Papeete, adjured Jill to be very sure to eat much fish. "Preferably," he added rather wistfully, "lagoon fish."

That night after supper we pulled out our much smeared (and only) chart of the Pacific and decided to procrastinate no longer, but to agree once and for all where to make for. The trouble is, with Tahiti, that it is more or less bang in the middle of the South Pacific, and whichever edge you choose as a target is roughly three thousand miles distant.

"I suppose," I said, "that we should really go to Auckland. It's the closest, at about two thousand three hundred miles, but we'd probably get a better price for *Salmo* if we went on to Sydney. After all, it's not very much farther."

"Oh, I hate talking of selling her," Jill replied. "Poor *Salmo*. It doesn't seem fair after all she's done for us. Do you suppose that whoever buys her will like her as much as we do?"

"Don't quite see how they could," I answered. "Not till they get to know her, anyway. But what else can we do? After all, it's going to be the money we get from her that's going to buy our tickets home."

"Yes; I know it is," she said gloomily; but then a thought struck her and she went on more cheerfully, "But if we went to Hawaii we'd probably get lots more for her even than at Sydney, wouldn't we? They say that everyone in Hawaii is a millionaire, and besides, the passage home should be cheaper, at least it ought to be. That's the worst of Australia; it's one of the few places in the world that are farther from England than Tahiti is."

"Well, if you come to that," I went on, following her train of thought, "Los Angeles is even nearer England than Hawaii is, and by all accounts it's probably the best market of any for selling a boat in."

The seed was sown and very soon took root. All sorts of motives prompted us. To go to Australia and stop would have been a fizzle-out to our voyage, we somehow felt. California, though, was a different kettle of fish altogether. '. . . Oh we knoo we shouldn't do it, but before we hardly knoo it. . . .' Los Angeles had been settled upon in our minds. Not only was it almost twice as far away as Auckland, but it was also dead to windward, and *Salmo*, like any small sailing-boat, slams and bangs and bounces into a head-sea in a way she never does with the wind more free. And somehow the goal seemed all the more attractive for being a bit difficult to achieve.

"Oh, that'll be terrific," said Jill. "Won't it be splendid when we arrive! We'll sell our film to the Hollywood television tycoons and they'll fairly smother us in dollars. Oh, I bet they do."

We hadn't actually had any of our film developed yet. Reel upon reel of it had been shot and posted

back to England for processing, and never a foot of it had we so far seen. Often we became thoroughly depressed about it, thinking of all the money we were spending on film and never being sure whether the heat might be melting it, the exposures haywire, or any one of a hundred and one other things wrong. But now that we'd decided to go to California all this was forgotten. Life had suddenly become very, very good, and very exciting.

The first person we told of our change of plan (for we had originally intended to go to South Africa by way of the Torres Strait) was Freddie, the Consul.

He was quite horrified and drew me to one side. "But, my dear chap," he said, "you must be absolutely out of your mind. Honestly, old boy, you just don't know what you'll be up against. Why, I mean to say . . . well, pregnant women, they're really quite extraordinary. Quite extraordinary. Take my tip. Don't do it."

We convinced him, at last, that things were not as black as he painted them. For after all, we explained, there were always the Marquesas. We intended to make them a sort of staging-post. If all had gone well thus far, we'd go on. If not, we'd come back.

Freddie cheered up immediately, congratulated us warmly, and invited us to supper, for he was bursting to tell us about his goat. The cook's nephew had given him half a goat the week before, apparently, and he had been injecting it with brandy with a hypodermic every day since; and tonight, he declared proudly, it was ripe at last, absolutely perfect.

We accepted at once. We'd never tasted brandied goat before, and felt that it was an experience that shouldn't be missed. Besides, we'd been feeling shy before making our announcement and were glad to have got it over.

Salmo was moored twenty miles from Papeete in a wonderful storm-proof funk-hole, with two anchors out and lines festooned to various useful palm-trees, so we had no worries over her safety and decided to spend our last night in Tahiti, ashore with Freddie. It turned out to be just as well that we weren't worried about her; for during the afternoon it began to rain, gently at first, and then harder and harder and harder. The wireless issued a hurricane warning.

The sky grew dark as pitch and we had to put the lights on a full hour before sunset. This was no mere shower, so we abandoned our original plan of going out to do some last-minute shopping and sat, instead, reading old copies of the 'Sunday Times' from the Consulate collection. The wind whined eerily, and the rain, which had become a deluge, lashed and splashed as it hit the sodden ground. The paths in the garden ran like rivers, and the heavy canvas screens that sheltered the verandah clattered and clashed despite all our attempts to lash them firmly in place.

"The blasted Foreign Office," said Freddie savagely, as we dragged the enormous dining-room table to one side of the room. "They *won't* let me mend the roof. It's this perpetual economy campaign of theirs. They're even thinking of shutting the Consulate altogether. And until they've made their minds up, they won't give me a penny, not a single penny, for repairs. And now look at it."

We looked. The sight was impressive; for the largest of the holes seemed to have been directly over the table, and it was as if a tap had been turned on. The cook, a wizened old crone by the name of Virginie, brought in a large zinc bath and placed it on the floor to catch the worst of the torrent, cackling to herself, "*Eh, aïee; c'est le toit. C'est le toit.*"

In due course we had our supper, the verandah screens still banging and clattering furiously, and the rain hissing and roaring outside among the palms. Beside us the zinc bath tinkle, tinkle, tinkled as it filled. But the goat was delicious. There were no vegetables to go with it, for the island was in the throes of a shortage: instead we ate lentils. Even our last meal ashore, we reflected, was not providing Jill with an overabundance of the vitamins which the doctor had invited her to collect. Altogether it was a strange farewell, but then it would hardly have been Tahiti if it had been otherwise.

By morning the disturbance was past, and the whole island steamed as the bus took us back to our anchorage. By some oversight we had no beer with us, and all our bus-mates considered this a most disturbing state of affairs. Everyone else had lots. Our immediate neighbour, a big, brawny, six-foot Tahitian, nudged Jill, politely wiped the neck of the bottle on his *pareu* and handed the bottle to her, including me in the offer with a wave of his arm.

Tahitian buses, I think, are the friendliest I have ever travelled on. They invariably carry several guitar players, and everyone sings for all he is worth. Luggage is carried on the roof, with two small boys perched on top to load and unload it as required, and fish are slung in lines from bars at the back. Why everyone who travels on buses in Tahiti has to carry fish with him I'm not sure, but apparently it is more or less *de rigueur*. The same applies to beer, and the whole atmosphere is one of carnival.

At length we arrived. The two small boys flung down our bundles, and the bus rattled away through the palm-groves; the last we saw of it were the festoons of fish flapping as they jolted, and the crown of bananas that encircled the luggage on the roof.

It was only the work of a few moments to change from our shore-going clothes and stow such shopping as we had been able to do before visiting Freddie. The lines were untangled from the palm-trunks, the

anchors weighed, and the sails set. "At last," we said. "Here goes."

Salmo heeled to the breeze as she headed for the pass, overtaking a huge canoe with four men on board, perched on a seine net, paddling out on a fishing expedition. The water inside the lagoon was green, but beyond the wide white wall of surf that marked the reef everything was a deep, pure blue. It was nearly low water, and we could see the top of the reef breaking the surface in the troughs of the waves. The overnight disturbance had thrown up a heavy swell, and each wave swept in magnificently; rearing up, toppling forward in a torrent of white foam, and then sweeping over the reef with a roar, leaving a white mist of spindrift behind it, trailing like a mane of silver behind the shoulder of broken water. The pass was less than half a mile wide, and as we lifted high on the crest of each succeeding monster we could see the reef stretch unbroken on either hand, our own little blue pathway the only fragment of unbroken water in a long, long ribbon of raging foam. The roaring filled our ears. It is a frightening sound, and we both heaved an inward sigh of relief as we left it behind and turned our bows north-eastwards.

Gradually the palms, the beaches of black sand, the houses, and the hillsides astern merged into a greenish blur; by evening all that we could see of the land was the blue-black silhouette of saw-toothed mountains. Around us stretched the sea: miles and miles and miles of sea, unbroken to the horizon and far beyond it, ahead and on either bow.

We should have felt calm, unhurried, and at peace with the world, for it was a lovely evening. But we didn't: we just felt sick. "At least," I reflected, as an invisible hand squeezed and squeezed again at my innermost digestive tracts, "I should take comfort from this situation. For after all we are *both* sick. It is therefore more probable that it is seasickness than morning sickness which is to blame." We knew that seasickness passed off in time. Of morning sickness we had no experience.

The diagnosis was correct. Our agony only lasted its usual time, and the ordered routine of life at sea soon settled down upon us. But progress was miserably slow. We had expected a beam wind, and a steady beam wind at that; for were we not in the south-east trade-wind belt, as marked on our chart? Instead of that, day after day, all that we encountered were calms and foolish little head-winds, the legacy, we presumed, of the near-hurricane of our last night ashore.

I had intended to steer a more or less direct course for the Marquesas, but we found ourselves pushed farther and farther to starboard of our intended route. One evening we met an island, and the next day, another, and began to have doubts about the wisdom of relying

exclusively upon our one and only chart.

"Which way do we go round this darned island?" Jill had asked me when we sighted the second one (the first had been safely away to starboard) and I had gone down to the chart to find out, though without much confidence in the outcome.

"Well," I had replied guardedly, "can you see either of its edges? If you can, then go round that way."

"All I can see at the moment," said Jill, "is five palm-trees sticking up out of the sea. Oh, no. There's another one, that makes six. Don't you know where we are? What island is it?"

"It doesn't actually give it a name," I said, after prolonged study. "It's just a sort of dot, and besides there's a good deal of marmalade on the chart round here. I *told* you not to spread the bread on the chart-table. Anyway, I don't think it matters much, it can't be more than about ten miles long. Either side will do."

Needless to say, we chose the wrong side, and promptly ran into more islands—Tuomotus (or, as the early navigators cheerfully called them, 'The Dangerous Archipelago') —before we drew clear once more. They're fidgety little brutes; even from the masthead you can't see much more than palm-trees growing out of the water, but like all these coral atolls they have reefs. The reefs, though unpleasant to run into, do have their advantages, however; for the water is deep right up to their edges, and the breaking surf, even on the lee side, makes such a roar that except in very unusual conditions one is unlikely to run into them without warning.

In due course we sighted Uopo Island, the first of the Marquesa group, dawdled past it for three mortal days, and at length, after twenty days (we had reckoned on ten), flung our anchor over the side in Taiohai Bay in Nukuhiva. We had a bunch of letters on board for Bob the Trader, one of the dwindling number of old-timers left in the islands, so we set off ashore to deliver them.

"These *damn*' flies," said Jill, dancing up and down and slapping herself as we walked along the sandy track that skirted the bay; "aren't they biting *you* at all? Oh! Ooo! Oow!" She doesn't take kindly to insects. Or to suffering in silence either.

Bob, when we found him, was nearly as bad as she was. "Aye; it's these no-no flies," he said. "They're the curse of the Marquesas. Never known them as bad as they are this year, though." His forty years in the Pacific had left his Liverpool accent completely intact. Dressed in shorts and a blue-and-white striped pyjama-jacket he was a patriarchal figure as he sat at the little table on the verandah in front of his store, a typewriter idle beneath his fingers. The schooner was due from Papeete next day, but he didn't seem at all anxious to get

on with the paper-work that its arrival would entail.

"Number Two, Pacific Road is my address here," he said. "The Angermeyers at Academy Bay in the Galapagos are Number One. All the yachts go there first and on to me afterwards. Regular as clockwork. There was one in last week who'd done that. He brought me a sack of potatoes from Academy Bay that I'd ordered four months ago from a yacht going the other way. Best potatoes in the Pacific they grow there. But, as I was saying. Terribly conservative yachts are about the routes they follow. You're the first one for a long, long time who's doing something a bit different. Here. Have some of this 'Flit,' ma'am. Those damn' no-no's seem to be bothering you again."

Bob's store stands fifty yards back from the water's edge at the very head of Taiohai Bay. Sitting on the verandah we looked down the long, fjord-like bay to Uopo Island, twenty miles away, bristling up from the water in tall, impossible crags and towers like a stylised fairy castle. The colours are superb at all times, but the sunrises, Bob told us, are sometimes almost unbelievable. He'd looked for a situation like this for years, he said, before he finally picked this particular spot to build his house. We found it easy to believe him.

Bob was most hospitable, but he had very few fresh provisions to offer us. Mostly, he said, the fruit and vegetables of the island were grown in Taipeevai, the next valley to the northward. If we planned to stock up before sailing, why didn't we go on there for a day or two? "Besides," he said, "there's a young American archæologist and his wife staying there now. Name of Suggs"—he called it Soogs—"they'd be pleased to have a bit of company."

We'd been reading Hermann Melville on the way up to the Marquesas, so we knew all about Taipee Valley, and thought that this seemed to be a good suggestion.

The Soogses (we never could stop ourselves calling them that) lodged with a Marquesan family three miles up the river. We paddled the dinghy up the first mile and a half and then walked the rest of the way through palm-groves. Most of the villagers hereabouts had horses, and probably because of the impending arrival of the schooner, terrific quantities of copra were on the move, slung in sacks on the horses' backs. The quantities were terrific by Polynesian standards, but, so Bob and everyone else assured us, any other race could produce ten times as much with the facilities at hand. The islanders' philosophy, however, very sensibly dictates that if you earn enough money to buy tinned meat, cigarettes and beer, then there's no point in making any more. Better to sit and gossip, or bathe, or make an odd flower garland or two to wear on your hat. The present surge of activity

Bob attributed largely to a craze for motor-scooters which had suddenly hit the island. One had appeared a few months back, and at once everybody else wanted to own one.

Mrs Soogs, when we found her, was looking slightly harassed and obviously wasn't expecting visitors. She was dressed in a *pareu* and could just be seen, in the very middle of their bedroom, entirely surrounded by a sort of zareba of cardboard boxes. She was packing, she said. Some of the boxes contained clothes, some of them stone artifacts and shells, but most were full of bones. Her husband, she explained, had been concentrating mainly on graves. It all sounded rather ghoulish.

Apart from the more ordinary difficulties to which archæology seems to be prone, such as no-no flies and hamfisted diggers, the Soogses were suffering from visa and money trouble. They had come out intending to spend three months in the Marquesas and, thanks to the scarcity of passages, had already been there for six. Now their visas had expired and the New York Museum for which they worked was having difficulty in getting more money out to them. To crown all, said poor Mrs Soogs, that very morning they had been told that they had to leave the island by tomorrow's schooner. "And just *look* at all the stuff we've got to take with us," she wailed, "and now Bob's just found *another* big grave. He's out there digging at it now, and he'll probably be back with another dozen boxfuls."

In this she did Bob less than justice. It seemed that he too had spent a harassing morning. Instead of being out digging as his wife had thought, he'd been having another set-to with the Papeete visa authorities by way of the wireless office. His first words on arrival home were, "Relax, honey, we're not to go on this schooner after all." We later heard that they didn't get away for yet another three months.

We bought two hens in Taipeevai to provide fresh meat (and with any luck an egg or two) on our journey. I had given them to Jill to carry down to the dinghy upon our final embarkation, pleading that I was lame. (As a matter of fact I was, having misguidedly gone for a walk in bare feet to the very top of one of the passes that led out of Taipeevai; my theory that my feet had out-toughened those of the Polynesians proved to be mistaken.) I had also told her (though this is in dispute) to make sure that the hens' legs were properly tied. Jill reached the dinghy and plonked them down into it, then turned her back on them to see how I was getting on with the remainder of the load which we had somehow accumulated. With a squawk, one of the hens leaped up, scrambled out of the dinghy and raced like a wing three-quarter for a large bush well up the beach. "Look out!" I yelled. "Oh, I *told* you to see

that its legs were tied together. Oh, for goodness' sake, *catch* the darned thing."

"Oh, you *didn't*," wailed Jill. "Oh, I thought that *you'd* tied them," and she dived in pursuit.

Behind the bush the hen had chosen lay impenetrable prickles and safety. But the thought of fresh meat fading out of her life untasted spurred Jill almost to a frenzy. The hen, with a triumphant cackle, covered the last six feet without touching the ground; but so did Jill, and she disappeared head first into the bush, her legs waving and jerking spasmodically. There were muffled cursings and cacklings, and finally Jill came out of eclipse, triumphantly clutching her victim once again. "I got it," she announced proudly.

Afterwards the hens settled down well to life on board. We fed them every morning on rice and bananas, in their hutch on top of the cabin, and grew quite fond of them. They never did lay any eggs, but they tasted quite delicious. Perhaps it was the bananas.

Four days out, Jill became overcome with a sort of Kanga complex and decided to count everything on board, with the idea of finding out whether we had enough to last the voyage, though what we would have done if we hadn't remained unspecified. "We've got twenty-seven tins of meat," she announced at the end of it all, consulting a grubby little bit of paper, "and four of kipper and those two of saurkraut that you insisted on buying, but what on earth you did it for I never *could* understand; neither of us likes it; and two big ones of dehydrated cod and . . . Oh, well, it looks as though it should be about enough. How many days do you think this leg is going to take?"

The same question had been running through my mind for some time, but somehow we'd never quite got round to working out exactly what route we'd have to follow and what winds we'd be likely to encounter. This seemed to be as good a moment as any to do so, better than most, in fact; for that very morning I had found that we had gone far enough north for me to be able to plot our position on the very bottom edge of the North Pacific chart instead of at the top edge of the South Pacific one. For the first time, therefore, Los Angeles and *Salmo* lay on the same bit of paper. I doodled with dividers, drawing bold pencil scribbles to indicate the course I hoped we would be able to make if the trade winds behaved as advertised, and found that with luck we'd be able to go more or less due north as soon as we encountered the north-east trades, sail straight through them and then go about on to the port tack and head for Los Angeles.

"Two weeks," I muttered, "till we meet the trades; seventeen days or thereabouts to get through them; ten on the port tack. . . .

Well, taken all in all, say probably forty days or a little bit more. We've been out four already, so that leaves about another forty. Call it forty from today," I finally suggested.

"But you keep on saying forty," said Jill. "I thought it was going to be forty from Tahiti. And then I thought that if it wasn't, it was going to be forty from the Marquesas, and now you say it's going to be forty from today. It's all very difficult. We probably *won't* have enough food in that case."

"Oh, well," I said rather guiltily, "we'll manage all right somehow. You're quite right. I probably *should* have worked it all out before. I always *used* to do it before we set out for anywhere."

A thought struck me. "How much have we to drink on board? I'd hate to run out of that half-way."

Jill knew I was talking of six o'clock drink, not water. We both knew we had plenty of that. Our six o'clock habit, however, had become very precious to us. It was one of the day's most important milestones.

We had, we discovered, half a gallon of Bob's *vin ordinaire* (very), two bottles of whisky and one of brandy. I therefore divided up our proposed course into four equal chunks, crossed by heavy dotted lines spread a couple of hundred miles on either side in case we didn't follow the intended track, and with great ceremony we marked these lines, 'Penultimate Whisky,' 'Brandy,' and finally, 'Ultimate Whisky.' We would not allow ourselves to open a bottle, we swore, until we had crossed the appropriate line. Thus, we hoped, if we had to go six-o'clockless at all, we should do so in little patches throughout the trip, and not have a long sad vista of it to look forward to at the end, as we might otherwise have to do.

On the twenty-third day out, much to our surprise, the paraffin ran out. Or rather it showed signs of doing so. When I went to fill the ready-use can from the bulk tank nothing more than a dribble came out. 'It can't be empty,' I thought; and then, 'Or can it?'

Not only could it: it was. We tried to think back and remember when we'd filled it last, and came to the conclusion that it must have been soon after Christmas. We had each thought the other had put in another fill since then. This was rather disturbing; for we had been using paraffin at the rate of nearly a quart a day, and had grown very smug about the splendour of our cooking, our weekly bread-bakes, our toast for breakfast and our curry suppers.

By draining the cabin lamps, and the heater which lay neglected and rusting in the fo'c'sle, and by wringing the last dribble from the tank, we collected half a gallon and decided that we should light the stove only once a day from now on. Life seemed very bleak all of a sudden. The twenty-odd days still

to go seemed to stretch themselves into an æon.

The most economical way to use the stove, we decided, would be to fill the pressure-cooker as full as we could conveniently manage, with rice or some other bulky food like spaghetti, every time the stove was lit, cook it, and then wade through the rather depressing contents at successive meals until the performance had to be repeated.

"This is perfectly beastly," said Jill, spooning a dank skein of spaghetti into her mouth at breakfast the next morning. "If it were even warm, it wouldn't be quite so foul. But like it is: cold. Ugh."

I tried to be stoical about it, but cold spaghetti for meal after meal calls for very high-quality stoicism. We began to rack our brains for palliatives.

Methylated spirits was the answer. We had, we discovered, more than a gallon of that and began to experiment with ways of using it. The best turned out to be to fill the cabin lamps with spirit, remove the glass chimneys and shield the flames from draught by putting the lamps into a biscuit-tin. A saucepan could then be put on top and heated. It was a somewhat laboured process, and entailed squatting on the deck and nursing the biscuit-tin and saucepan between the knees to prevent *Salmo* from throwing the whole contrivance endways, but it was an enormous improvement. We now ate our rice and spaghetti warm and even, on occasions when we felt reckless, made a sauce to put over the top of it.

The flour, too, was giving trouble. It must have been a bit of a job-lot when we bought it, for creepy-crawlies began to appear within a week of purchase. Now, after six weeks, the big glass sweet-jar in which it lived looked like a museum exhibit, 'The Life-Cycle of the Flour Beetle.' Our hunger was such, however, that we dared not throw it overboard. It was, after all, more or less edible. We had no sieve on board, but Jill had bought a very fancy dress in New York, with a built-in petticoat made out of some sort of net stuff. This petticoat had already proved invaluable in the Galapagos, when we converted some of it into a langouste trap by making a basket of it and baiting it with very high bits of goat-meat. Now, we used the rest for removing flour-bugs; every time we needed to use flour we sieved it through the petticoat and dumped the wriggling catch over the stern, cursing the Chinese shopkeeper from whom we'd bought the consignment every time we did so.

Fortunately the actual process of sailing *Salmo* was extremely easy. For nine-tenths of the time she sailed herself, and only on two nights in all the forty-six that the voyage finally took us did we have to keep night watches. One of these two nights was during our crossing of the doldrums. We had had very light winds all the preceding day, but the evening looked threatening.

All round the horizon giant thunderheads piled themselves up like great black drifts of smoke; lightning flashed continuously and there was a hot, menacing feel in the air.

Salmo slipped through the water, riding over the oily swell, her bow-wave whispering, and big bubbles of silver-blue phosphorescence trailing out astern. Every now and then the wind fell so light that the sails shook, and as I sat at the tiller I could hear the shackles on the sheets flap against the rigging with a dry clacking noise. The lightning grew closer and brighter, and great peals of thunder followed. The stars were gradually blotted out, but still no wind came. It was all rather uncanny.

The change from calm to violence was very abrupt. One moment we lay inert and lifeless, rolling to the swell, and the next there was a whistle of wind. *Salmo* heeled far over and the whispering of her bow-wave changed to a strong surging swish. I took the Genoa jib off and rolled down a couple of reefs on the mainsail, and no sooner had I done so than the rain arrived. It hissed and pelted down, but as it came, so the wind freed and I was able to let *Salmo* rush on through the darkness without shortening sail further. As abruptly as the squall started, so it stopped. The wind backed, fell away, and then died altogether, and we were left rolling and rocking idly; stars came out, and I was able to see another squall forming up behind the first. Our period of idleness was only a short one.

Seven different squalls hit us that night and the next day, all with dangerously strong winds that ruined our record for unbroken sleep. We had grown very lazy, we found, after so many nights of idleness.

Slowly, slowly, eighty miles a day, we worked our way northward, passing in turn our 'Penultimate Whisky' and our 'Brandy' lines. Each day we marked with a cross our noon position as estimated by dead reckoning, and oncé a week we checked it by taking a sight.

Jill was wonderfully well, and it was only the cooking that she found too much for her. Each time she tried she would be overcome with seasickness, so we decided that the effort wasn't worth the making. Instead, she began to make herself a maternity dress to wear on arrival. ". . . Well if I don't I won't have a *thing* to wear."

Still the days ticked on, each one very like the last, sunlit days and, more and more as time drew on, slightly hungry ones. We began to dream of food, and spent hours discussing it. "What I'd really like," Jill once said, "would be a *huge* leg of lamb, with roast potatoes and brussels sprouts and mint sauce, and after that fruit salad and lots and lots of cream . . . whipped." Our mouths watered, and we ploughed on through our dehydrated cod and cabbage. On Sunday mornings for breakfast we had tinned kippers.

Once we caught a fish on the line which we always trailed astern—a tunny, and it was delicious, but very soon afterwards we had to stop fishing altogether because of the albatrosses. These infuriating creatures seem to swarm in the North Pacific, and the particular brand with which we were afflicted were even more gormless than albatrosses usually are. Which is saying quite a lot, for all albatrosses seem to be half-witted. No sooner would they see us putting the fishing-line out than down they'd swoop at it in a clumsy sort of dive, and grab the spinner in their beaks where the hook would catch them. The first time it happened I dashed on deck as soon as I heard the reel go screeching out, much elated at the thought of fish, only to see a great flapping bird being dragged along the top of the water, with two of its mates, greatly perturbed about things, hovering over its head. Slowly I reeled in, grabbed the creature by the scruff of the neck and unhooked it. Then I threw it into the air and off it sailed, making two graceful circuits of the boat before doing exactly the same again. We soon grew bored with this and hauled in the line. We were hungry, but not hungry enough to eat albatrosses.

At last we crossed the 'Ultimate Whisky' line, which left us with eight hundred and fifty miles to go. Almost immediately the wind shifted. With great delight, after five solid weeks on the starboard tack, we went about. There was a coat of barnacles all down the port side above the level of the anti-fouling paint, and the galley, for a change, leaned towards us instead of away. It took a day or two to get used to, but we were both jubilant. It's a great event when, going to windward, you are at last able to head directly for your destination instead of merely towards it.

We were getting nearly to the end of our methylated spirits by this time, and the last of the paraffin had been poured into the primus. How many more 'brew-ups' could we manage with it, we wondered: six perhaps?

With the freeing of the wind our speed increased. Seven hundred miles to go, six hundred . . . and then, for about the forty-ninth time, we split the Genoa. This time it was worse than usual; the rent went right across, and we had no light canvas left for patching. Jill kindly volunteered one of her skirts. "After all, it doesn't fit now, anyway." So our staid tan sail, after six hours' solid stitching, developed a gay white cotton stripe across it, enlivened by signs of the zodiac in blue.

Three hundred miles to go. We felt we were practically there, and to confirm our optimism we saw a ship, the first we'd seen since leaving Tahiti. She was a long way off, but it was a memorable occasion. Our speed had increased greatly, and we dared to hope we'd perhaps make port in two days and a bit.

I was taking sights every day now and had begun to wonder, as usual, whether the chronometer had kept its rate properly. If it hadn't, then we might have a day more or a day less at sea, depending on whether it had gone faster or slower than our estimate.

One hundred miles to go and the wind grew really boisterous. It was then that we ran into shallow water, shallow by comparison only, and the motion grew really violent. I sat at the helm for hours on end glorying in the speed, but slightly apprehensive at the same time. We swooped and surged and curvetted on our way and every now and then buried our nose in an unusually steep wave. In the normal course of events we should have reefed, but neither of us was in the mood.

"When do you think we'll see land?" Jill asked.

"Sometime about midnight, I expect," I told her. "We go in between two islands about then, and both of them have lighthouses. If we don't see one we should certainly see the other."

"Oh, boy; oh, boy! Then with any luck we'll get in tomorrow. About midday. And we'll go ashore and have a bath and a really *ginormous* meal. I wonder if we'll be able to get roast lamb."

We found that we'd enough whisky left for one largish drink apiece, or two smallish ones, and unanimously decided to make it one largish one. It was while we were having it that my nerve broke. "We'll really have to heave-to for a while," I said. "It'd be silly to go and carry away the mast now, and we're quite likely to if we go on like this much longer."

We hove-to. It was really rough now, but the temptation to go on had been strong.

For supper we had rice with curry powder in it. The last tin of meat had been eaten the day before. The methylated spirit was finished and the primus was on its last sniff of paraffin. "Oh, I *do* hope we get in tomorrow," said Jill.

As darkness fell the wind lessened. We got under way once more and I peered eagerly round as the first watch wore on, looking for some sign of a lighthouse. Nothing was to be seen. I turned over to Jill at midnight and asked her to wake me as soon as she saw something. In my bunk I kept wondering and wondering whether the chronometer was right . . . why hadn't we seen a light? Why? Why? Why?

Four o'clock came and still nothing was in sight. "But I think it's a bit foggy," said Jill, "perhaps we've gone past the island."

"Perhaps," I replied; "but even if we passed one of them we should surely have seen the other. The gap between them is only about twelve miles."

The wind failed altogether. *Salmo* lay motionless in absolutely calm water. There seemed to be no point in staying on deck any longer, so I too went below to sleep. 'How long is this all going to last?' was

my last thought before dropping off completely. The pilot-book told us that on this coast fogs and calms were both very frequent at this time of year; it was not an encouraging outlook.

Breakfast was a gloomy meal of cold curried rice. There was still no wind, and visibility was less than a mile. "Oh, well. If we don't get in today, then perhaps we'll manage to get in tomorrow," said Jill. "Oh, I *do* hope we do."

A small breeze whiffled over the water just before midday and set us on our way once more. Simultaneously the haze partly cleared and allowed me to take a sight, which showed us to be where I thought we should be. ". . . Funny," I mused, "I suppose we *could* have gone between those two islands without seeing them. Well, if we did, there's another that should show up fairly soon now, it's called Catalina Island."

The mist on the starboard bow shredded away as the sun sucked it up, the base of the fog-bank took on a slightly solid look, and within moments we were able to identify it as Catalina. Almost immediately after, the same thing happened astern; two more islands appeared and we saw that we *had* come in between them. We danced a sort of jig together. After all, this time it seemed almost too good to be true. *Salmo* had made her last landfall under our ownership, forty-six days out. And Jill, though hungry, was fighting fit.

AN APPLE—A MEASURE OF OATS

BY CECILIA DABROWSKI

THE spring comes to this far country of New Zealand from out of the soft, phantom rains of September and the prodigal flames of the sun in Libra.

Burgeoning up out of winter's bitter and frost-seared depths, the lush young crops heel over in the wind and the hand of man can reap the things it has sown. But it is not in the reaping that death lurks in the furrow, but in the planting time of autumn. Then a man in peril might have to snatch his own life out of the harsh, dusty pit of the season, foiling death by word of command.

Coming down through the dew-wet grass towards the ploughed field, Tom Davis whistled gently and continuously to himself and to the three-horse team walking at his shoulder. The knobbed points of the hames bobbed above their silhouettes like the horns of huge snails, while the jingling harness-music clashed all round them, rhythmic with the tread of their giant, feathered hoofs.

Immense and curiously protective, the near- and off-side chestnut horses flanked the beautiful bay middle mare. Tom Davis felt the willing strength of them vibrant in the air, and his pride in them was at once a thing fierce and gentle. An old man's wisdom and belief and faith he had put into the training of these ones, when others had forsaken their like for mechanisation, leaving behind the jingle of bit-ring and harness, and great hearts that drive a full and valiant pulse.

At the closed gate to the paddock he spoke to the horses, saying, "Whoa there," automatically and unnecessarily, because repetition bound, they had stopped a fraction of time before he spoke. He opened the gate and they followed at his call, halting while he closed it—waiting as he hung the three nose-bags on the fence and the kit with his own meal in alongside them. They went forward again across the field.

The old man took hold of a coupling-rein and brought them round, arranging them in front of the discs. Not until he spoke and said, "Whoa back," did they back, and then each stopped after the requisite number of paces. They waited while he picked up the chains that lay where they had dropped the evening before, and fastened each to the hames; they stood quietly while the long plough-lines were unhooked from the points of the hames.

Tom Davis's hands, bronzed and

blunt-fingered, gathered the plough-lines up, gently shaking and lifting them through the air until one on each side of the three horses was correctly angled from the bit-ring, coming over the great quarters into his fingers in a triangle shape. "Gidup," he said, clicking his tongue, and the three threw their weight into the collar as one. Each leaned forward and lifted a great hoof with almost telepathic synchronisation, and the discs eased forward, not jerking, but taking hold deep in the dark earth, cutting straight and true behind them.

Somewhere in the middle of the morning they heard the train whistle, shrill as an angry stallion. Turning, Tom Davis saw it coming towards them—the groaning of its wheels was like a living thing in travail. Fleetingly he wished that he had been on the far side of the paddock when it made its sporadic run to the hydro station. The slow, crawling terror dragged its great length up the gradient, coming upon the team from behind, huge wheels grinding in a shuddering frenzy, while the sulphur-tainted smoke eddied across the paddock, wreathing itself about the horses. It smote at their senses with a treble menace, sight, sound and scent. Like things beleaguered the three stood uncertain.

The old man tied the reins back tight to the discs and went and stood by them, where they could sense his nearness though they did not look at him. There was a faint tremor among the three that grew to a visible quiver of still-leashed apprehension. The near-side chestnut lifted a tentative hoof and reefed at the bit. The mare swung her head high in a half-circle towards the railway-line—pulling the near-side chestnut's bit askew until he complied and stared likewise. The off-side chestnut leaned into the collar a little and stared apprehensively at all that the blinkered bridle would allow him to see.

"Easy now, easy now," intoned the familiar voice alongside them, and the near-side chestnut dropped his great fore-hoof again. Some of the loose earth crumbled in, falling against it like a wavelet against a rock. The mare continued to stare ahead when she could no longer see anything, ears pricked against the sound.

When the engine with the curious men in the cab was gone, and the last truck went past with a clanking blur of indifferent wheels, the old man loosed the reins and urged the horses forward again, smiling a little to himself, pleased that there had been others to see the proof of his lore with the team.

He was something rare now, an anachronism on the landscape, but the might of the three had the power to turn eyes for another backward look. The deep solidity of the plough-gashed earth was a fitting thing to take their leviathan stride. They moved with powerful dignity in their vast amplitude of strength—stepping freely with a strong, slinging action.

Tom Davis would watch them as they worked, knowing the satisfaction

of an artisan seeing his craft fulfilled. He had been careful in the breaking of the three, careful that they should never learn defiance—believing that no horse knows its own strength until it has resisted and conquered a man, and so they never learned the truth of that.

When they were younger and in training, after the day's work was over, he had sponged their shoulders with a luke-warm solution of salt and water, washing away the sweat-stained collar-marks to prevent galling. Knowing that he had no cause for wariness he could walk behind each of them to adjust an S-hook and keep his mind only on that, or stand level with their great quarters and run a hand down their lower legs, and say, " Lift up," and the big hoof would come up easily into his hand and lie across his knee without more than its own weight while he tended the hoof. He would talk to them quietly and his voice reached down into them, infiltrating the pits of their brains—they understood its tone, just as they could read the wind, or be suddenly panicked by the contagion of terror in their kind.

As one who studies these things he knew the indisputable truths about the great horses, and he built his code of rules round those truths. He knew that a horse does not pull by instinct, but through training; that he learns firstly of fear from another's flinching; that if anyone plays a practical joke on him he only feels the torment and does not understand the humour; and when urged he will pull till his great heart breaks and he goes down on his knees, unable to rise again, still willing, still believing that the possessor of the whip-hand comprehends the limits of his endurance. 'No,' the old man thought, saddened, 'there are times when the beasts of God are better creatures than those who have dominion over them.'

When finally it was time for the longer midday break, the sun was at its zenith, its molten fervour filtered by a humid cloud layer. Tom Davis halted the team and went to fetch the three nose-bags and the kit from off the fence. He loosened the bridle-straps, slipping the bits from the horses' mouths, and placed the nose-bags, filled with chaff and oats, over their heads. He collected his own meal and sat down near them to eat it.

The sea-birds that had followed after him all morning swooped closer in mewling, dark-pinioned flight. He threw the crusts to them, watching them squabble. He looked away at the lowering sky. The clouds lay in a vast grey pall. Leaning over the horizon in mock largesse they taunted the bleak and parching earth. Far away on the mountain range their shadows played in empty buffoonery. The old man said, " They all reckon it's going to rain, but it won't. About an hour from now that wind will go round to the north-west and it won't rain for weeks. Always does when the clouds lie like that at this time of the year."

The three flicked an attentive ear

towards his voice and continued feeding—the muscles bulging in the sides of their heads. Irregularly they were forced to lower their heads as one or the other sought the gleanings in the bottom of the nose-bag by pressing it against the ground and lipping lightly at it. When they had finished they stood, all three of them, staring mutely towards the willow-bordered water-hole in the far corner of the paddock. Spring fed, it was deep and secret and cold, and the fallen feathers from the wild geese lay on its banks in slender gashes of colour like a random guerdon left for some dark genie. There was water there they knew, and out of the heat and burning toil the knowledge of it came to them, cool on the wind, so that they yearned after its thirst-slaking promise.

Tom Davis got up and took off the nose-bags, rubbing each head affectionately, and said apologetically, "No drink for you yet, and not for a while after I get you home. Any man who has seen a horse in trouble with colic isn't going to let it happen to one of his own." He adjusted the last bit again, and his hands, old, sun-darkened and large-veined, lingered there; his fingers curved, cupping memory, ghost-filled with labours long done. 'No, I never want that trouble on my conscience,' he reflected.

And then as old men do, he became troubled and distracted over the things he had seen, and he said aloud to the three, "There are people who say animals don't feel pain—they try and fool themselves that life for you is just a sort of blur and it doesn't matter what happens—that you don't understand. None of us really understands pain, but anything that is flesh and blood must feel it, and if animals don't, then the whole of creation is out of order."

Filled with a kind man's wrath at irreparable damage, the indignation worked in him for a while, and he finished by saying angrily, "And it's not for any of us to be trying to criticise the works of God." To him such talk was criticism, a fool's babbling to stifle conscience; a deliberate denial of the might and beauty and perfect sensitivity of an Almighty handiwork. For they were perfect, he knew that. In a strange way all animals were entirely complete in themselves, and into the careless hands of the imperfect their time span is delivered.

The old man walked over to the fence and hung up the nose-bags and kit. Then he urged the team on again. The great legs, wide-angled from solid breadth of body, lifted largely and thrust against the earth, straining and powerful. About their hoofs the long fetlock hairs creamed in a flurry of endeavour. Trace-chains grinding, swingle-trees lifted, quivering taut, and the discs took their hold of the earth.

He worked the team up the side of the hill, walking alongside the discs, following the crumbling earth that churned darkly beneath the blades in rapid wake. The three breasted the slope with vigorous endeavour, coming into the wind

earnestly, benign of expression, ears slightly lopped. Each strong forehand lifted for the next step, great wide knee bent, arched to its zenith, then plunged down in leviathan accord with the other two.

When they had disc'd the whole of the small sloping hillside, Tom Davis spelled the team, and they went down onto the flat that was smooth and level as the back of a hand, and which he knew like his own. A while after that, because he was tired, and because he had never really believed or witnessed such a thing as anyone being thrown off the discs, the old man did as he usually did and climbed into the seat perched above the blades.

In front of him the three pulled steadily, and behind him the seagulls wheeled and settled to earth spasmodically. Sitting there he felt the gentle bumping of the discs, slicing the furrow. Above him the cloud wrack had dispersed in the changing wind. He was pleasurably aware of the relief that riding had given to his aching legs. He looked about him, studying the slow dehydration of the grasses beneath the drought. He calculated that it would last another three weeks. After an hour he spelled the team and then rode on again behind them.

Lulled by the rhythmic stride of the three and the quiet of the land about him, Tom Davis was utterly unprepared for the incredible thing when it happened. Almost he accepted it passively, as one accepts the terrible inconsequence of an evil dream. There was a sudden, wrenching, concerted movement beneath him and he was flung bodily from the seat, catapulted in a sickeningly rapid parabola—thrown down like any other portion of earth before the still-turning blades winking their steel mockery of the sun.

As he felt himself leave the seat, and the reins slackened in his grasp, the old man called to the three, automatically, and once only, "Whoa there." His voice was loud and forceful with surprise and anguish that death should approach him thus. Then he hit the ground, sprawled on the furrow, the breath gone from his lungs and fear in his heart. He lay immobile, gasping, the reins still clenched in his fist.

But the three did hear him. Over the thin cries of the following seabirds they heard and heeded, and the leviathan thrust of their effort-grooved quarters stopped on the instant; each great hoof, caught in midstride, finished that one step, sank into the loose earth with finality and stayed there motionless.

After a long moment Tom Davis looked up. Above him the steel discs made a gleaming row of multiple moons to eternity, and one of them touched his forehead with the bare promise of death. Sprawled on the dusty earth he raised his head, and the blade bit a thin red line on his forehead for his unwariness. He writhed himself away from it and sat up. One booted foot lay between the giant, hairy fetlocks of the middle mare. She eased her weight off one of them

and rested it on the point of the hoof. Not a fraction more of the ground in front of the hoof was imprinted by the movement. Like a rock she stood. Incurious, impassive, the three still held his life in their care, and training fettered, they waited motionless for the word of command. For God did not give to these placid ones of cold-blooded lineage a soul wherewith to comprehend the terror sudden death holds for a man with all eternity waiting.

Trembling, the old man trod blindly over the slackened trace-chains, and found his way to their heads. The three stared at him, square blinkered, and now mildly curious. On each in turn he laid a shaking hand, and no words could he find now to say to them. He who had always talked to his horses stood before them numbly. The heat from their great bodies, sweated out in their furnace of toil, glowed against him, easing the cold fright from his bones. He stood there, his head bowed a little, overcome by the strange imponderability that the beasts of God in their mortality can be rewarded only by man for what they do. And the three did not know, would never know, that because they halted to the word of command he had not died beneath the glittering disc knives.

An apple—a measure of oats, the brief pleasure of a small reward, was all he had to offer in return for his life. He was hurtfully conscious of the inability to communicate his reason for gratitude, acutely aware of the impeachable trust that is given to those with dominion over the beasts of the earth.

Tom Davis walked round the team, gratitude welling within him, and gathered up the plough-lines. His hands firmed upon them, steady now, and the three came to attention dutifully. "Gidup," he said, and clicked his tongue. The three pressed into their collars, humble and willing, and the discs slashed into the dusty imprint where his body had lain.

AFRICAN VIEWPOINTS

I

LIGHT ON SOME DARK SUBJECTS

BY BETTY MITCHELL

MUCH has been written about our Federation during the past year and I feel rather diffident about adding more. But I have often heard the sincere wish expressed here that the British people, in order to be able to form an accurate idea of conditions out here, should be told more about how well the ordinary Europeans and Africans, in spite of their immensely different backgrounds and outlooks on life, get on together in domestic and other spheres. There are many friendly contacts which never make news just because they are so commonplace. After more than twenty years' residence here I myself take lots of things for granted—things which people overseas would not know about unless they were told.

Let me say at the outset that this is not intended to be political. Some reference to that aspect may creep in, because it is almost impossible to avoid it when writing about the Federation these days. Nor will this be a broad picture covering all views of the situation. On the contrary, it will be an individual one, infinitesimal in relation to the whole, but, I believe, representative. In short, I want to strike the human note, showing the ordinary, often raw African one comes in contact with in the course of one's daily life —the usually happy 'boy' who leads a double life, as it were, living simply at his tribal home in the kraal for a while, then coming voluntarily to work in a modern European home. As a rule, one finds him over-anxious to please at first, and therein, I think, lies one great obstacle in finding out his real opinion about anything at the initial questioning. For the average African will often agree with the European or say what he thinks will please him, and not necessarily what is the truth. Also, he may answer 'No' correctly to a query, but if the question should be repeated, he will happily say, 'Yes' or 'Yes, I have not,' where we would say, 'No, we have not.' It always reminds me of the old song, 'Yes, we have no bananas,' which I realise now is not so unusual a statement after all. But on the whole, in spite of some misinterpretations, it has always surprised me how quickly the African *can* pick up a smattering of English, even

the proper use of some of our confusing idioms.

I have often employed Nyasaland Africans as servants here and my present house-boy and garden-boy both come from that territory. They have been working for the family for a few years now, and appear to be very happy and contented.

The house-boy has had a little education and speaks English fairly well. He is of average height, rather slight build, has high cheekbones, and an intelligent appearance. He smiles and laughs a lot and has a pleasing personality. I signed him on first when he came here in the usual way—to the back door when he heard we wanted a new house-boy. He has been home to Nyasaland twice on holiday since that day. Each time he has returned voluntarily to work here. He tells me he can make more money in Southern Rhodesia than in Nyasaland. He leaves his wife at his kraal back there because, he says, if he brought her here she would want too much. She would want him to steal from the kitchen, a thing he never does himself—and she would cause too much trouble altogether. (Ah, sinful Eve! What a reputation we women still have to live down!)

We house him free in modern premises on our plot and we provide him with his food which he cooks himself. There never has been any racial disharmony between us. But there have been a few times when our wills have clashed. Earlier in 1959, before the Emergency, he went through a 'demanding' phase, when he would say, "You must give me this," or "I want that," maybe a blanket, more money, or clothes. I like to help Africans when I can, but there are limits. For one of the big problems we have to face is that the average semi-educated or uneducated African has not yet developed a sense of responsibility. He will recklessly spend his little money on some useless trifle, and then come to his European employer and demand necessities. It can be argued that he receives small wages and cannot afford to be self-supporting—in the same vicious circle goes the fact that his intellect is still low and cannot justify higher wages. And at present, Federal Health services, even down to rabies vaccination for their own dogs, is entirely free to Africans. I say these things simply to show that equality between Africans and Europeans cannot come suddenly, only gradually. Obviously, chaos would result if a drastic and sudden change were made now, before the great majority of the Africans were able to assume responsibility and contribute their full share towards running this country. The proportion of educated Africans is still very small, but it is rising at an abnormal rate and everything is being done to change conditions to suit just that. I can well understand how irritated the educated Africans must get with the restrictions of pass laws, registration certificates, and so on, but these were brought into force years ago for the Africans' own protection.

While I am writing generally, I would like in parenthesis to comment on something which I have noticed in certain British papers. It is the reference to Africans as 'Coloured people.' Now, in the Federation anyway, we interpret 'Coloureds' as being 'people of mixed descent, partly European and partly of a darker race.' The difference in interpretation can lead to confusion. We have Africans in the Federal Parliament, but our Coloured Community are not yet represented there by their own kind.

But to get get back to my original theme—the Nyasaland garden-boy employed here is a quiet, raw African who knows no English except a few everyday phrases. He is a large, healthy, muscular type and goes about his own work with a serious expression which belies his happy and almost childish nature. For he smiles and laughs on the slightest provocation—at the misplaced digging activities of our dogs, usually in his carefully tended flowerbeds, at the endearing way of chicks hopping on to their mothers' backs, and at the dignified bearing of our solitary pea-hen which flew in from somewhere last year, having apparently lost its memory or its way, and has stayed here ever since, loose and aloof. This garden-boy also has his own room or *kia* on our plot, and he and the house-boy appear to be very happy together, judging by the way they laugh and chat in their own language, when they are off duty.

That was before the trouble started in Nyasaland.

I remember I tried to ignore the rumblings and the disturbing articles in the Press. I told myself it was all propaganda and would not come to anything. All the same, it was unsavoury to read the screaming newspaper headlines reporting a certain African's snarling words, "To Hell with Federation," just before Christmas 1958. I could not help thinking that leaders should talk and act in public in a way to command respect—and I thought sadly of the trouble caused by another who used to scream and chew carpets! Rumours, of course, ran riot. There was, for instance, the one about what eventually became 'the strike that never was,' supposed to be staged for Friday the 13th of February. Nothing happened.

When the Emergency *was* declared, I noticed that the house-boy looked serious and puzzled as he moved quietly about the house doing his work. We brought both boys in to listen to the Declaration relayed over the radio in their own language. The house-boy listened in silence and made no comment. Then later, as he was clearing away the table after a meal, he suddenly asked me, "Missus, what is trouble in newspapers and on wireless? I want to know, but I do not understand. You must tell me."

These same expressions—'I want,' and 'You must'—but used this time in such a different way. I halted as I was about to open the refrigerator door and looked at him standing there, so quiet and worried-looking. I felt hopelessly unable to

deal with this situation. I thought of the publicity this vexing situation was having all over the world. I looked out of the kitchen window and saw the garden-boy industriously weeding the garden. Our two dogs were stretched out asleep under a leafy, shady jacaranda-tree. I could see our little mother kaffir hen scratching away as usual in the sand and could hear her clucking to her nondescript, multi-racial chicks. The sun shone down on the peaceful Rhodesian scene. No, we couldn't have trouble here, I thought. It just couldn't happen here! I thought of our wonderful, peaceful history since the pioneers had opened up the country, of their struggles to civilise the Africans, of their fights against ignorance, disease and the elements. This country belongs to all Rhodesians, irrespective of colour. Our children were born here—it was home to them. I myself, Scottish by birth and very proud of it, was also a Rhodesian and equally proud of that. I prayed that mass hysteria would not sweep through the whole Federation.

I searched for easy English words which this African could understand. I tried to remember the quiet but forceful way in which our Prime Minister had told us to carry on without panic. I tried to convey that the Government's action was correct.

"Yes, Missus, I know," the house-boy answered. "I know the Government is good. But why other boys say Neuropeans must leave Nyasaland—that is no good! I say, no work or money for boys if Neuropeans go—boys would fight with each other and make too much trouble. My father in Nyasaland, he say, 'This Congress no good—and this Dr Banda—why he make too much trouble?'" The brown eyes looked keenly at me, the gesticulating pink palms stopped in mid-air in a pleading manner. Suddenly my heart felt immensely relieved. If even a few half-educated Africans could think and reason like that, it was heartening indeed. But this couldn't possibly be one isolated incident!

The course of events since then is well known to everyone. At the moment of writing the future of our Federation is still uncertain. When I hear some people advocating in the newspapers that Nyasaland should break away and become a Black State, as well as remembering that it is too poor to stand alone and has not enough educated Africans to run it, I remember our house-boy's plea. And I think of our happy, uneducated garden-boy, and thousands like him, without one political idea or thought between them.

Periodically I have noticed a distinct tendency between both races to understand each other better since the Emergency. One old vegetable-boy, who has come here regularly for years, said to me a few months ago, "Well, I'm going home, but I'll be back next year—if I'm still in this wicked world."

I asked him where his home was, and why he made that last statement. He looked at me with soft, dark old

eyes and answered quietly, "Nyasaland, Missus . . . but that Congress! —that Dr Banda!" And he shook his head and went sadly on his way.

I had been thinking of writing an article like this for a long time, and as I watched that forlorn, bent old African in his ragged suit wheel his bicycle away, my mind was made up. I wanted to tell everyone about his simple words, spoken without a trace of mistrust, misunderstanding or fear between us, spoken just naturally between one Federal citizen and another.

Many of us out here come from Britain, and I want to tell you at 'home' that we have not changed into domineering individuals lording it over the poor Africans, as we are so often portrayed in your papers. In Southern Rhodesia it is a significant fact that the indigenous African population, and those who have come from Northern Rhodesia and from Nyasaland to work here, are on the whole happy and contented, and keen to go forward with the European. And how can rash statements about Africans' political views mean a thing when so many Africans are ignorant? They *must* first be educated and taught to think for themselves. It seems to be forgotten sometimes that, far from suppressing them, the Federation is doing everything it can do to bring them forward to take their place in a unique racial partnership.

Instead of being abused in exaggerated and sensational reports in some British newspapers and magazines, our politicians here, who understand Africa and its problems, deserve every support in promoting their very difficult multi-racial policy. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that they are dealing with people in vastly different stages of development, and that in itself means patience and understanding between everyone concerned.

II

MAN HUNT

BY DORIS PATERSON

WHEN I went up to Rhodesia on holiday I fastened the front door of my cottage by its bolt and its wooden latch, went out at the back and tried to lock the back door. The key would not turn, so I asked my landlord, on whose farm the cottage stood, to see that it was duly locked.

"Oh! there's no need at all," he said airily. "Everyone round here is honest."

When I returned, the little pink cottage looked as gay as ever under

its deep reed thatch; my African maid had it clean and swept; flowers and cakes from friends stood on the table.

In the evening I unpacked, opened a cupboard and found it sprinkled with dead match-ends and broken coat-hangers. I opened drawers and found match-ends among the tossed and crumpled contents, went to put my suitcase with the others and found them missing. It began to occur to me that the cottage had been burgled, and I spent a rather uneasy night (for the back door was still unlocked) making an ever-growing list of missing items, mostly dresses and other things readily salable to Africans.

Next day I tried the bathroom key in the back-door lock. It worked perfectly and I told Vaselina, my Basuto maid, always to lock the door before she went to bed.

The following morning Elizabeth, the cook on the next farm, had her blanket stolen; and blankets had been taken from the maid at the farm down the river. To a Basuto his blanket is overcoat, raincoat and bedding, and its loss is serious. The police had been sent for and I suggested they come on to me.

'The police' turned out to be one burly Afrikaner constable, slow-witted, stolid, and with very little English. He dropped heavily on to my sofa, produced a large limp sheet of paper, spent some minutes arranging it and himself so that he could write on it, and then said:

"I hear a native broke into your house and stole some things."

"I don't *know* that it was a native," I pointed out.

"Oh, that. Of course it was a native."

I told my tale, and with excruciating slowness, like any village constable anywhere, he managed to get it written down. He insisted on doing it himself, for me to sign, but every few moments appealed to me:

"You must help me with how to say this, my English is not good."

That night I heard someone prowling round the cottage, and saw through the window the flash of a light. Feeling very far from brave, I crept through the rooms with a torch—there was no electricity—but I was securely locked in and the prowler went away with only a bag of firewood for loot. Two mornings later Vaselina came to me with a scared face.

"Madam, last night I forget to lock the door, and this morning no primus, no mealie meal, no pan, no jar of jam, no soap, no matches."

By now we were pretty sure who our burglar was. My landlord had been perfectly right; everyone in these parts was honest. But this young man had escaped from Pretoria gaol, where he was serving an 'indeterminate sentence' for seven offences in Basutoland and even more in the Orange Free State. This is a miserable kind of sentence, for the prisoner never knows when it will end, if at all. The only consolation is that, if he does escape, he cannot obviously be sentenced to anything

more. Now Molife was living precariously in the hills behind the farm, wrapped in Elizabeth's blanket, eating my mealie meal cooked on my primus, possibly washing with my soap and wearing one of my twin sets.

It was not calming to know that Molife had been ransacking my kitchen while I slept, and I borrowed the big Rhodesian ridgeback from the farm. He was an indolent beast and would never have bestirred himself in the least for burglars, but he looked formidable. A friend of mine had a ridgeback just like him; he too lay and slept, regardless of intruders. One day a nasty-looking tramp came to the door. My friend seized the dog's collar, hauled him to his feet and dragged him to the door.

"You better get away quickly," she panted; "I can't hold him much longer!" The man fled, my friend released the dog's collar, and the dog dropped where he stood and slept again.

But even with such protection, living alone in the cottage was no fun, and when we heard that a neighbouring farmer had received a letter from Molife saying that he would come and kill him, I sent for the police again, to report the second burglary. This time I was visited by a quick-witted, bloodthirsty detective sergeant, who, however, was principally interested in a copy of Trotsky's book 'Stalin' on my bookshelf, and spent some time probing to discover if I were a Communist. A book by a Russian is quite enough to make a South African detective suspicious.

The police of both Basutoland and Ladybrand, our nearest Free State town, were now on the lookout for Molife, whose chance of a life of freedom grew slenderer every day, and next evening he was sighted on the hill behind the farm. My landlord seized a gun, and organised us all. Me he sent in my little old car to borrow a strong searchlight from a friend some miles away. His seven-year-old son came with me. At the frontier post three African police, old friends of ours, stopped the car and asked me to turn round and drive them to the back of the hill so that they could attack from that side. We took them some miles beyond the farm, watched them start up the slope in the dusk, about-turned and set off in quest of the searchlight again. As we passed the farm gate once more my small passenger said wistfully:

"What a pity this isn't a racing car: we'd have been back by now."

I begged him to get out and go and join in the excitement, but he stubbornly insisted on staying with me to give me his protection. Bless him.

Having got the searchlight and returned to the farmhouse, we found that everyone but the maids was in full cry on the hill. I deposited my protector and stumbled up the rough slopes in the dark. As I could hear and see no one in the wide valley that lay beyond my hilltop, I sat down on a high point and flashed my searchlight in different directions,

partly to let anyone who wanted it know where it was, and partly, I think the largest part, so that Molife might see it and run in another direction, into the arms of the ambush. Though, of course, he might be creeping quietly behind me to snatch the torch. I groped about and found a large sharp stone which I held in my free hand, though I never admitted this poltroonery to anyone.

As a matter of fact Molife did run in another direction, with the field streaming behind him, but he escaped in the dark.

A couple of days later he was caught. Most unwisely he climbed the kopje above the police training-school; the police surrounded it and closed in on him; with no chance of escape he sat on the top watching them. He had a few of my belongings with him, and they brought them to me for identification. They had him too, sitting in the back of the open police truck, handcuffed and with one wrist chained to one ankle, a good-looking young African, who grinned when I questioned him whether he had been able to work the primus. I begged that he should not be assaulted, and the police assured me that as he had confessed to everything, he would not be. But one is never too sure.

A few days later I received a buff document headed '*Subpœna in Publieke Vervolging*,' which commanded me to be at the magistrate's court in Ladybrand at ten o'clock on a given morning.

When the day came it was one of those spring mornings that lift your heart the moment you awake. There was a scent and a feel of spring in the rain-washed air, and after breakfast on my stoep I set off at once for Ladybrand, although it was only eleven miles away, so that I could loiter at will.

On the next farm my neighbour, still alive despite Molife's threats, was ploughing one of his 'lands'; two ploughs, each drawn by a full span of sixteen oxen, moving slowly to and fro and turning up the dark chocolate earth. Everywhere the yellow tulp starred the veld, and now and then the emerald of young wheat broke the tawny monotony, while, after six months of dry weather, there was the rare sparkle of water in donga and pond. The road led over a mountain, and up it my elderly but valiant little car climbed slowly in bottom gear; from the summit was a view I loved, of the high, blue Maluti mountains, and I paused to revel. Another pause for rejoicing was when I found a particularly arid patch of veld covered with drifts of blue which turned out to be wild lobelia intermingled with the fragile wild iris. When Ladybrand came into view below me I stopped again to enjoy the sight of the little, conifer-shaded town lying at the bottom of the rocky slope where the aloes were in crimson bloom. The hoopoe was calling 'hoo-poo-hoop'; a hot, sleepy sound. What a morning to waste in a courthouse!

I reached the police offices at 9.50 and walked all through the empty

rooms until at last I found the only other person on the premises. He was, it transpired, the magistrate himself. He told me to wait in the courtroom till the proceedings began. The courtroom was empty, cold, dingy, dusty, and the clock had stopped. When I was chilled with sitting there I went out into the sun of the back stoep. My old friend the constable appeared now and again, and so did a sergeant who looked more intelligent but wasn't. I mistakenly drew their attention to myself by reminding them that I was a working woman who could not wait all day; they soothed me by promising I should be the first witness called, and then decided it would be a good thing to run over the case with me in order to sort out the two burglaries and the two lists of stolen goods. The constable suddenly (no, not suddenly, not that constable) had the bright idea that as his report looked rather messy—he had spilt a good deal of ink on it—he would copy it out. He asked me to sign it and then added the original date. I pointed out sternly that he had implicated me in a lie, but he had his clean copy—though not quite so clean after I had corrected his spelling—and my point was not taken.

The farmer who had brought over his native girl, as he called her, owner of stolen blankets, joined me on the stoep, entertaining me with interminable stories in which he was always the hero. Elizabeth, the other stolen-blanket owner, had failed to appear, and her mistress was telephoned to and told to produce her. As it was by now after eleven I went off, South African fashion, for morning tea, which I should have hated to miss. That did it. No sooner was my face buried in a steaming cup than I was called, and proceedings actually began.

White witnesses and black sat in different parts of the court. There were two witness-boxes, one for white and one for black. Three languages were used: Afrikaans, English and Sesuto. The translator, who was the only person in court who showed any human feelings, was kept busy. He translated all the witnesses' statements to the prisoner, asking if he had anything to say. But Molife stood tall and erect in his box, leg-irons on ankles, arms folded in his blanket, a motionless, expressionless statue of some dignity, and said never a word.

Despite promises, all the other witnesses were taken before me—just to larn me, I think, for being impatient with the majestic South African law. The pace was exasperatingly slow, partly on account of the necessity for translating, and partly because the magistrate, besides conducting the case, wrote everything down himself in longhand. Elizabeth was asked:

"Your address?"

"Riverside."

"Nearest railway station?" (Why did he want to know that?)

"Maseru."

"How far?"

"Two miles."

Later I was asked the identical

questions and gave identical answers, yet when my statement was read out I found he had written 'nearest railway station Ladybrand, two miles.'

"Are you a housewife?" he asked me.

"No," I replied clearly.

But without asking what I was, he wrote me down as housewife. I let it go.

By the time I was called I was so bored that for fun I walked purposely into the black witness-box, from which I was hastily shoo'd out like a hen. The magistrate was a young man, but for some reason he had such a terrifying effect on the constable and the sergeant that their hands shook, they lost their way among the papers and got more and more bewildered every moment. The sergeant questioned me, with supplementary remarks from the magistrate, and was thrown into confusion if I did not give him the answer he expected.

"Do you know the prisoner?" he began.

"Yes." (I had seen him in the police truck.)

"What!" The consternation on his face was so comic that I looked at the prisoner to enjoy it with me, but he was staring impassively before him.

When the sergeant came to the stolen goods he decided to take the lists of the two burglaries together. I knew what would happen, and inevitably the moment arrived when he got them inextricably muddled.

"What are those exhibits?" snapped the magistrate, trying to disentangle him, as he faltered to a standstill.

"Those, your Worship, belong to the second burglary."

"*What* second burglary? You haven't said anything about two burglaries."

The sergeant quavered:

"But there were two, your Worship."

"How can you tell that?"

"One was in July and the other in August."

"How can you prove that?"

The sergeant looked so woebegone that I said helpfully, "I can prove it," adding reluctantly, "your Worship."

"How?"

"I was there at the time."

"But"—to the sergeant—"the witness was away."

"Not at the time of the second burglary, your Worship."

"When did it take place?"

After some paper shuffling:

"August 17th."

"When was the witness away?"

(Why doesn't he ask the witness herself? I wondered.)

It took longer shuffling to find those dates again. At last:

"Between July 9 and 30, your Worship."

"Then which of these exhibits belongs to which burglary?"

This inconsiderate question confused the sergeant so much that at last the magistrate, who probably wanted a cup of coffee, declared:

"The court will adjourn till the papers are in order."

So once more I sat on the back stoep, and another half-hour dragged slowly by, until at 12.30 we entered the courtroom again. The sergeant looked at me, and, though I had not spoken, said, "You must relax!" From him I thought that was good.

This time we made some progress, and got as far as the identification of my property.

"Is that your primus?"

"Yes, your Worship."

"How can you identify it?"

"By the piece of string on the pump."

"It seems to me," said the magistrate severely, "very strange that you can identify a primus by a piece of string on the pump."

"Yes, your Worship," I replied. "I agree that it sounds absurd. All I can say is that my primus *had* a piece of string on the pump, and that all the other things look exactly like the things I lost. I cannot, for example," I added quickly, getting it in first, "identify the bar of soap."

I thought of the sheep-stealing court cases among the mountain Basuto and of how, when asked how he can identify his sheep, a Basuto will say, astonished at the question:

"But naturally I know my own sheep. I know their faces."

Though of course I had not lived with my bar of soap very long.

After a quarter of an hour's questioning the magistrate said:

"It is nearly a quarter to one, so we will adjourn for lunch and resume at two o'clock."

At 1.50 I was back; the magistrate returned at 2.30 and questioned me for a quarter of an hour. It could so easily have been taken before lunch. But at last I—though not the unfortunate prisoner—was free. I asked the constable if I might take my exhibits home with me. This was refused. They were needed for the next court, presided over by a real judge.

"Mayn't I even take my jam jar? I need it."

"No," he said in his thick Afrikaans accent. "We must show your yam yar to the yutz."

They presented me with a ten-shilling witness fee. I went out and found a ticket on my car; it had been parked in the wrong place. I obediently sought out the police and they fined me ten shillings.

THE NOVEL

BY JOHN ONSLOW

It was decided that I should write a novel. It was not my decision, but there are occasions when it is easier to obey than to resist. My declarations that I did not know how to do it, that I could not write anyhow; that I had lost my pen, that I had not the time, that the children made too much noise; that I had to finish digging the north end of the garden, that I had not got a comfortable desk; that I could not see with the lights as they were, were brushed aside. A few days before Christmas a massive desk arrived in a van; beautiful mahogany, with a green leather top stamped with a golden filigree. On Christmas Day I unpacked a many-knuckled desk-lamp, a fat dictionary, an encyclopædia and a book of synonyms and antonyms. There were enough cigarettes to last for at least a day's hard writing.

I was launched on my career as a writer of best-sellers, but kept it secret from the firms of publishers lest they became too excited. Somewhat loggy from festivities I settled to my task, and was encouraged to find that I was temperamental.

I roughed out the plot, but it had gaps in it. Impatient to begin, I decided that I would write my way out of them when the time came. I riffled through the dictionary in the hope that I should find some good and little-known words, and started:

'Ulysses Theodore Trenarren first saw the light of day in the little Cornish fishing hamlet of Pengorgan. The green Atlantic rollers thundered in diapason beneath the towering cliffs.'

I paused to admire the well-balanced sentences, glad that our hero was born. Then I went outside to buy some clothes-pegs and a brush from a gypsy woman.

"Coffee's ready," Susan called from the kitchen. "We don't want those things," she said, "we've got lots."

"She had a ragged child with her," I said.

"What's that got to do with it?" said Susan. "You can't read the paper now, or you'll never get your book written."

I was half-way through the door, on my way to my task, when—

"Would you be a dear and ring up The Stores? I forgot to order any matches. Two packets will do."

I got Ulysses into the village school, after a struggle lasting two hours. He was naturally not like

the other little Cornish boys, and suffered accordingly. The little brute kept seeing fairies among the potted geraniums on the sunny window-sill of the classroom.

'"'E be proper missled," said Hugo Pengellet,' his hunch-backed schoolmaster, who drank smuggled spirits in secret, and chewed parsley before the lessons.

Ulysses's father was a man of violent temper, but after the death of his young wife, whom he strangled with a piece of tarry rope from his fishing-boat, he took to religion, caught pneumonia from sitting on her grave at night when it was raining, and died. Uncle Zeke, an old sea captain, assumed charge of our young hero, and took him to live in a big stone mansion at Fowey.

'There the little boats danced in the sunlight, and the gulls wheeled, shrieking as they plunged on the offal that floated on the slack tide.'

Andrew pushed Jane down the stairs, and the small eighteen-month-old girl lay on her back outside my door, roaring with rage and fright.

Uncle Zeke had plenty of money and Ulysses was packed off to St Clement's, the most expensive preparatory school in the British Isles. His rough Cornish accent and preoccupation with the sprites that inhabited the apple-blossom at the bottom of the headmaster's garden made him a target for the derision of his young companions, all scions of noble families.

'"You be deriding o' me naeow," his high, clear voice rose above the jeers and catcalls, "but I'll be a better man than thee, Lord Potting." He wrestled with the barbed-wire that bound him.'

"Afternoon, sir," said the grocery boy through the window; "we're clean out of raisin bread."

"Susan!" I yelled. "No raisin bread."

"Please don't shout," said Susan. "You'll wake the babies. I'm coming."

'Long after lights-out Ulysses slipped silently from "Carlo Dolci" dormitory, padding bare-footed along the dim corridors, past "Edmund Spenser" and "Milton" to the great marble staircase, down which he sped to the iron-studded front door. Past the gymnasium he ran, across the well-kept lawns to the shadows of the laurel bushes.' At a gypsy encampment on the common was one Knuckler Tansy, one-time lightweight champion of the world. Here by the light of the fire Ulysses learned to fight under Queensberry rules, and when he had rested, the Knuckler showed him tricks known only to the Romanies.

One night, with a lithe movement, he flung Knuckler Tansy over his shoulder against a waggon-wheel.

'"There is little more that I can teach thee, little master," said the Knuckler as he wiped the blood from his torn ear.'

My pen flew. I had the hang of the thing. As my readers will surmise, he started to throw the bigger boys about all over the place, and became centre-half for the First

Eleven. With a 'flying mare' he threw the assistant science master into the swimming-pool for a foul calumny on his parentage, and Rosamund, the headmaster's little daughter, clasped her hands in ecstasy behind the hedge.

Interruptions left me exacerbated. I could not get people to understand that I was a very precious temperamental being.

"The stove's out," said Susan. "I'm sure you put too much on. The builders are coming on Tuesday."

"Damn the stove," I said, and got up to go and correct things. "What are they coming for?"

"To build the new kitchen, of course, and we ought to start emptying the cupboards in the playroom."

"We?" I said.

At the age of fourteen, after six years at St Clement's, the transmogrification of Ulysses was complete. He spoke slowly in the manner of his filthy little fellow pupils, and his drawl was perfected. While the big Victorian plums still hung from the headmaster's trees the fruity resonance of his voice was the envy of all, and during the winter months he practised assiduously with rounded pebbles. The school barber kept his golden hair in curls. His front teeth were braced back sufficiently from their almost horizontal position to leave no doubt about his Norman descent. The spanner with which he was wont to crank back his incisors now rests in the school museum. Ulysses was already marked for the Foreign Office or the Church.

I tried to write for six hours a day, but my time-table of necessity was elastic.

"Herd of sheep in the garden," said Susan.

"Sheeps! sheeps!" shouted Andrew.

"Now, don't panic," I said severely, and fell over a heap of cars, bulldozers and plastic cows outside my door. "Who left a gate open?"

"You did," said Susan.

The sheep cleaned up the wallflower plants before we drove them out in a woolly stream.

Ulysses's time at Eton was uneventful. During his first term he suffered at the hands of Flash Chandler, a hulking coward in the Lower IV., but after Flash had burned him with a red-hot coulter for the sixth time, our hero threw his tormentor into the middle of Agar's Plough. He was soon elected to 'Pop,' and was captain of the Cricket Eleven. He made two hundred and thirty-one runs against Harrow to carry his bat to victory. It was at this match that Winston Churchill (as he was then) coined a phrase that rang as a challenge throughout the world:

"O tempora! O Mores!" he said.

Ulysses led the Shooting Eight to win the Ashburton Shield.

'"Keep your pencil sharp," he said laughingly to a young officer of the 5th Carabineers. The crisp

notes rustled as the butt officer counted them.'

I introduced a nice little bit of comedy when Uncle Zeke arrived blind drunk on Founders' Day and spilt a strawberry mess all down his moleskin trousers. It came as a disappointment when I found that Ulysses, for reasons of my own, had to go to Sandhurst. I had had great hopes of him in the Foreign Office.

A lorry with six tons of Chichester gravel drove up to the front door, and the driver and I spread it on and into the puddles on the drive. I had just got Ulysses to alight from his sports car outside the Old Buildings at Sandhurst, when a second lorry arrived with six tons of Chichester gravel, and the driver and I spread it on and into the puddles on the drive.

'Ulysses gazed speculatively at the youth who had climbed from the Levis two-stroke motor-cycle. Was he a gentleman? The string bag of oranges that dangled from the handlebars, the plaited straw basket on the carrier, the rough tweed coat all belied it.

'"My name is Trenarren," Ulysses introduced himself. "Eton," he added.

'"Pleasta meet yer. Tonks is mine. Blackwater Secondary. Gotter fix the flippin' meter. Electrician!" and Ulysses blushed for very shame.'

The Royal Military College (as it was then) assembled on Wednesday. On Friday the Gentlemen Cadets threw Ulysses into the lake, and young men from such schools as Winchester and even Haileybury and Fettes scoffed at him. He had slept in his underwear. That night he tossed and turned in torment of soul. They had not listened when he had cried aloud that he was from Eton and that his silk monogrammed pyjamas were coming by post.

"You really ought to get the bulbs in," said Susan, "and the downstair cistern is flooding again."

I rang up the plumber, and went out into a cold wind with a hundred and fifty daffodil bulbs.

I found it difficult to make our hero's life at Sandhurst exciting enough to hold my readers' attention. Luckily, however, a Gentleman Cadet in the Senior Term caught his Company Commander in compromising circumstances with a Staff Sergeant's wife in the boat-house. The wretched Major paid dearly for a moment's indiscretion. He gave up gin before breakfast in order to save enough money to satisfy the rapacious demands of Gentleman Cadet Fotheringay. At last the Major could stand it no longer, and quite naturally confided in Ulysses.

'"Leave it to me, sir," he said, opening his feet to an angle of forty-five degrees and hoping that his thumbs were in line with the seams of his trousers.

'"This is blackmail," he said astutely. His pace to the rear and salute were impeccable ere he went in search of Fotheringay.'

I am giving readers slices of the actual MS. so that they may see

the care with which I was writing. It will be noticed that I brought things to life with my details, such as the Levis two-stroke motor-cycle, and the seams of the trousers. Ulysses was granted two days' leave of absence, during which he sought out his old friend Knuckler Tansy. What was said over the savoury pot of hare stew in the depths of Epping Forest will never be known; but Gentleman Cadet Fotheringay disappeared.

'"Our peoples wander far, little Master," said the Knuckler, stroking the head of the éyas perched on his wrist.'

When I wrote that bit I knew that Ulysses and Fotheringay would meet in a snow-clogged pass in the Caucasus many years later.

Ulysses was just winning the welter-weight against Woolwich when Susan reported that Andrew had cracked his head open and needed stitching. I had heard some howls as a background to Ulysses's epic fight.

When Susan and the small boy had departed to the doctor, Jane woke from her morning sleep and needed urgent attention. I forced her tow-thatched head back with the bedclothes and fed her with sweets. Immediately she became self-feeding and I left her to guzzle.

After fifty or sixty hours with Ulysses I was heartily sick of him, and decided that it was time to show him in his true colours—those of a renegade.

The Major, to say the least of it, was pleased at the disappearance of Gentleman Cadet Fotheringay, and saw to it that Ulysses became a Senior Under-Officer. My description of his final passing-out parade is worthy of note. I wrote—

'There was a tenseness in the gaily-coloured crowd that thronged the green lawns as the Adjutant called the parade to attention.

'"Senior Under-Officer Trenarren," he commanded.

'Our hero strode past the ranks of his comrades to stand before the C.I.G.S.

'"Well done, my boy," said the Field-Marshal, and presented him with the Sword of Honour. He went on: "The eyes of Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Blenheim, Goojerat and Mooltan are upon you at this moment."'

I was tempted to cross out that speech, for not all Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff are so muddled in their thinking. On second thoughts I let it stand: it is the sort of speech I myself would like to make.

I sat for an hour or more wondering what to do with the little swine now. Susan brought me some coffee.

"How are you getting on?" she asked.

"Stuck, at the moment," I said; "but it's good, you know, sort of different."

"I expect it is," said Susan.

I dragged Ulysses back to the parade.

'Little did he know, as he marched past with the Sword of Honour at the Carry, that from a top-storey

window in the grey stone building a pair of baleful eyes was watching him. The Maharajah of Chaikhana was under close arrest; dirty buttons.'

I should explain that the Maharajah had every reason to be angry. Ulysses, with his vast resources, had bribed a Sunni Moslem prince to smear Chaikhana's buttons with rifle-oil five minutes before he was due on parade. The Maharajah knew also that Ulysses was responsible for the 'nobbling' of his horse before the Race for Gentlemen Cadets at the Garth Point-to-Point. Of course, our old friend Knuckler Tansy had been in on that.

I introduced these incidents, unimportant in themselves, to show that there was possibly terrible retribution awaiting Ulysses within a few hundred pages.

The head of a firm of builders, an electrician and a plumber arrived. I listened helpfully while Susan explained her ideas. Tear out this wall, move the door, build a wall here to make a passage; windows in there, high enough for the sink unit; switches for the electric cooker there; take out the built-in cupboards and make the new passage level with the other floors.

It seemed to me that I must sell the book as soon as possible. I shuffled back to my desk to kick Ulysses on his way through life.

"Where d'you want the rubble put?" asked Susan.

"I'm bear. I'm bear," said Jane, unexpectedly, and crawled into the knee-hole of my desk, growling.

"In the duck-pond," I said, and pulled the bear out by its feet. This made it howl.

That night Ulysses loaded the Commandant's daughter, Hydrangea, and the Sword of Honour into his front-wheel-drive Alvis and roared towards Southampton.

Major-General Sir Cosmo Campobello had lavished all his love and understanding on his daughter. After Hydrangea was eight years old not a day passed—except Sundays, Good Fridays, Easter days and Christmases—in which she was not exercised in map reading for an hour before breakfast, followed by an hour's arms drill under her governess, Miss Turtle, who later became Commandant of the A.T.S. Yet, for some reason, Hydrangea was not happy. Just as I got the two runaways safely into bed at Hartly Wintney the vicar arrived on his annual visit.

It was a mistake to have stopped at the village. Major-General Campobello had not been awarded the O.B.E. for nothing. With the aid of the permanent staff of the R.M.C. (they loved the old warrior) he manned a road-block south of Basingstoke, and there he horsewhipped the young villain and, rummaging in the back of the motor-car, pulled out the Sword of Honour and broke it across his knee. Ulysses's chance of a military career was gone: Uncle Zeke altered his will and refused to forward any money. (Earlier in the novel I had killed off Uncle Zeke in a terrible death-bed

scene, but a few strokes of the pen put matters right.) Nevertheless, the education of Ulysses, and his intimacy with the aristocracy and the better type of commoner, stood him in good stead. In no time at all he was selling ball-point pens, and many were the amorous adventures he had as he travelled the by-lanes of Montgomeryshire and northern Shropshire. He married the station-master's daughter at Llanffylin, but since there was only one train a day he became bored. With great skill he drowned her in a tarn at the foot of a frowning mountain. Although I say it myself, the description of the final ghastly scenes was magnificent, and the tarn was plagiarised from Mary Webb.

At the very moment that Ulysses was becoming a director of the Right Easy Pen Co., a young builder came through the wall of my room in a cloud of dust and bricks.

"Can I light the fire in the sitting-room?" I asked Susan. Yes, I could if I went to the garage for some logs. It was raining and one of my bedroom slippers had a hole in it.

At Eton, Ulysses had impressed his tutor with his mathematical ability, and now he fiddled the accounts with ease. This enabled him, not only to move in the best social circles, but to transfer big sums of money to a bank in Urfa, a small town in south-east Turkey, close to the Syrian border. He took flying-lessons, and twenty-six foolscap pages later, with ten thousand Iraqi dinars and a Miss Gladys Dufour from the Windmill Theatre, he flew to Baghdad. Soon he was accepted at the Embassy and the Alwiya Club, and had taken over the Mastership of the Royal Exodus Hunt. Later, he sold Miss Dufour to a shiekh of the Shammar tribe at a handsome profit.

Somewhere at this point a herd of cows escaped from a field and trampled on our young rose-bushes. I had pulled down part of the fence round the garden so that the builders could wheel their barrows without hindrance.

'There was a scratching at his door. Ulysses put a finger to his lips as a warning to the Circassian girl curled up on the divan.

'"Who is it?" he called.

'"It is I, sahib," whispered a voice. "Ibrahim."'

It was the Police Sergeant who had rescued Ulysses from the angry mob in the sacred city of Kerbela, and now acted as his personal bodyguard.

'"Enter, Ibrahim," called Ulysses, and the hawk-faced Arab stood before him.

'"Sahib, Inter Pol he come. You must flee."

'Ulysses gazed hungrily at the girl.

'"Good-bye, Petrova Alexandra Petronova," he hissed. "I will return. Good-bye, my eyes, my love, my little quail."

'Swiftly he disguised himself as a simple Arab fisherman, and with

a week's supply of dates and millet allowed the current of Mother Tigris to sweep him downstream in a *goofa*. By nightfall he had learned to master the gyrations of his flimsy craft.'

I described his epic journey down the Tigris to Basra at some length. At Kut I was interrupted by the local Hunt. I opened gates and pulled down rails, but they fell off in shoals, and the big fox ran in circles from covert to covert.

I now had two choices left. I could send our criminal down the Persian Gulf in a slave dhow and wreck him on the coast of Oman, or he could turn sharp left into Persia. I chose the latter course, and settled him for two years in the mountains of Luristan. Here he became Commander-in-Chief of the Lur chieftain's private army and marched on Isfahan at the head of six thousand men. Unfortunately for him the whole army deserted at the sight of a Persian policeman who had lost himself in the hills, and Ulysses finished the advance tied across the policeman's saddle. By feigning madness he was saved from the firing-squad, and with a begging-bowl made his way on foot to find refuge among the Kurds in the north. My readers will now see why I turned Ulysses into Persia. He was quite close to Urfa, and his money.

I had got him over the Turkish border when I was called to Guildford to take a driving-test. Since I had been abroad for more than ten years I was only in possession of a provisional driving-licence. The test was on a Monday. On Saturday someone pointed out that the car's licence had expired. I had been taking greater risks than Ulysses himself. The places at which licences may be obtained were closed. On Monday a friend drove to one of these places, thirty miles away, with all the necessary papers and money and was back with the licence in time for me to face my examiner. I drove with skill and care, but as I had a puncture it was of no avail. I was worried about Ulysses being nearly drowned in the River Zab when I took the test next day. At the last pedestrian crossing on the test route a drunken, tattered figure stepped off the pavement in front of me. It was Ulysses.

I looked at my examiner.

"That's all right," he said, "you did the right thing."

"It's Ulysses," I said.

"He's often around, but I didn't know his name," said the examiner.

I wrote nothing in those two days, and I became worried. How had Ulysses got to Guildford? I was not yet half-way through the book. I asked Susan, but she was equally puzzled. Bashi-bazoukery was rampant in the area of Urfa and Ulysses was bastinadoed mercilessly. Before the pain became unbearable he stared haughtily, but upside down from the tripod, at his tormentors.

'"I," he said with pride, "St Clement's—Eton—Sandhurst."

'The rods fell faster on his

bleeding feet, and the unspeakable Turks laughed and shouted: "*Yok, yok; belli, belli.*"'

However, one band of Turks released him prematurely. At this juncture there was a loud thump from over my head, and yells proclaimed disaster. I ran upstairs. Jane had piled all her bedclothes in one corner of her cot, climbed over the rails, and landed on her head.

Ulysses, irritated by his rough treatment, threw six Turks over his head into a dry nullah. They were soon picked clean by the vultures.

In Urfa he cashed a cheque, but the Beg, Mustapha Mahomet Pasha, threw him into a dungeon and cut off his ears. I now understood why Ulysses was wearing a balaclava helmet in Guildford. I rushed to tell Susan.

Perhaps we may be permitted one more glimpse of Ulysses before I stop writing.

He was carrying secret papers for Molotoff when, high over the Gobi Desert, he realised that his Mongolian pilot was a traitor to the cause.

'With the dagger quivering in his back the Mongolian whipped the great jet aircraft into an uncontrollable spin. Ulysses flung himself into the co-pilot's ejection-seat. Precious seconds were passing as he fumbled with the straps.'

We now have him floating down. If there is, beneath him, a Polish count with a goatskin full of water he may be all right.

Some time in the third month of writing, Susan came in.

"How's it going?" she asked.

"I've torn it up," I said.

A WEDDING IN LIMBUAN

BY P. A. SKOULDING

SINCE the recruitment of Gurkhas into the service of the British began in 1815, there has been a steady flow of recruits, leave men, discharged men and pensioners to and from the hills of Nepal. But owing to the policy of the Nepalese government it was not possible for ordinary regimental officers to visit the homelands of their men until 1952. Climbers in the Himalayas had hitherto been the only Europeans to visit the areas from which the Gurkhas were recruited, and they were tied down to a time schedule or prevented by the language difficulty from gaining any intimate knowledge of the people through whose lands they passed.

The British officers of the old Indian depots, Dehra Dun, Jalapahar and Gorakhpur, used to question the men closely on their tribal customs, languages and clan system, and in time built up an impressive catalogue of information that was all the more fascinating because it could seldom be verified by first-hand observation. As eager young recruits the men were brought down from the hills by their own recruiters, and as seasoned veterans they returned to their remote fastnesses, covered with honour won on battlefields from Ypres to Imphal. But when a Gurkha took his discharge, he disappeared as effectively as if he had been translated by some Mongolian Valkyrie to his warrior paradise.

What was the nature of the land that reared these extraordinary men? How did they live at home? How did they behave when out of the grip of regimental discipline?

When I was posted from Hong Kong to the Recruiting Depot in northern India I thought I might have a chance of answering some of these questions for myself. Captain Kajiman Limbu had left his old shot-gun in the company arms Kote when he had gone on pension, since he had not been able to afford the import duty into India.

"Take it with you," said the Company Commander to me, "and give it to Kajiman when he comes to draw his pension. You'll need a gun at the Depot." I did as he suggested, and a few of the migratory sporting birds fell before it during that winter season on the plains. Throughout the following hot weather and rains the gun remained greased in my wardrobe, but when the monsoon lessened and the paths to the hills opened, I was sent to the Pension Paying Post at the very foot of the hills where Kajiman lived. I

remembered the gun and took it with me.

The Post was just south of the area in which Kajiman's tribe, the Limbus, lived, and over Christmas and the New Year the old soldiers came in, many of them bringing their families with them a distance of as much as ten days' march for this important annual event. One morning Kajiman strode into my office tent, most debonair in the Limbu tribal dress — baggy-seated, tight-legged trousers and square-tailed shirt tied across the chest with tapes. Perched on his head at a jaunty angle was the small black-and-red checked-cloth skull-cap, and a scarf in the regimental colours of red, black and rifle-green was dramatically draped about his throat. He seemed to be thoroughly enjoying his retirement. "Oh, that's all right, Sahib," he said when he heard about the gun, "carry on using it until you have to go, and then bring it over to my house on the other side of the hill." I thanked him; for we were right on the edge of the Terai jungle and it was full of game—though my only success was a chital propitiously slain on Christmas Eve.

No European in the camp without a pass was permitted to go farther up-country than the little tea-shop at the top of the steep path that cut through the first line of hills. To me, then, Limbuan became a Never-Never Land, as enchantingly remote as King Arthur's Avalon, but it was with surprisingly little difficulty that the liaison officer arranged with the Governor of the frontier town that I could pay a special visit to Kajiman's village without permission from the Foreign Office in Kathmandu. I knew Kajiman's address, his village and district, but when I set out I made the mistake of presuming to find the way by the very approximate quarter-inch map instead of by simply asking passers-by. Needless to say, none of the footpaths in the hills is sign-posted. Kajiman's district was Chaubise, and as that was marked on the map, I made as straight a course as possible for it, not realising that in the hills the quickest route often looks the most round-about on the map, for it tends to follow the contours instead of cutting them. Also, Chaubise means the District of the Twenty-four Tribes, and this covers both sides of a long valley.

My orderly, Dilbahadur, was a seventeen-year-old Limbu who had come down to be recruited, and together we set off gaily at midday one Saturday, with the gun in its case and a haversack of warm clothing. After the initial grind up the atrociously steep path to the tea-shop at the head of the pass, I found myself looking for the first time over the terraced and mottled green slopes of Limbuan. Everything was very quiet except for the distant notes of a goat-herd's pipe, and as we stepped out upon the downward path I had the uncanny feeling that we were entering another world.

On the uphill march Dilhahadur had eased the strain by trying to teach me, rather breathlessly, couplets

in simple rhyme which, he assured me, were handy opening conversational gambits with Limbu maidens. One, to be used when passing on a hill, went:

> When going up hill it's very steep,
> And Little Sister starts to weep,

—sung in a high-pitched, quavering voice.

On the path we had passed many porters, both men and women, carrying merchandise up from the Indian railhead in conical baskets supported by headstraps. Their loads looked enough to reduce any grown man to tears. The line of porters would plod uphill forty or fifty yards and then stop and gingerly rest the load behind them on a T-shaped stick which each carried. But on the downhill run Dilbahadur's mood changed completely and he ran on ahead gaily singing another song, the words of which I could not catch, but which again involved somebody's Little Sister.

The path was well beaten; for it was the main trade route reaching eventually to Tibet, and on either side of it stood neatly thatched, two-storey houses plastered with white earth-wash and painted with a broad strip of red ochre round the lower edge. Pumpkins lined the thatch above the verandahs, rows of maize cobs hung below the eaves, and white, fluttering pigeons in the courtyards completed the scene of oriental rusticity. Dumpy hill-women, with golden ornaments hung about their noses and ears, and grinning, goblin-eyed children, peered out at us from verandah and courtyard. The grumbling roar of a stone quern from the black depths of some windowless house was the only sign of any activity. Apart from the empty Indian cigarette-packets on the path there was nothing there that I would not have seen ten centuries or so before.

> The blue dusk ran between the streets:
> my love was winged within my mind,
> It left today and yesterday and thrice a
> thousand years behind.
> Today was dead and past for me, for from
> today my feet had run
> Through thrice a thousand years to walk
> the ways of ancient Babylon.

According to the map we turned right, off the main track, crossed a narrow torrent and started to climb the next hillside. As the late sun began to fleck with crimson the far hilltops to the north, my earlier enthusiasm waned and I grew impatient with Dilbahadur's lack of urgency and his unceasing comments upon the scenery and natural life we passed on the way. Then we met a lean, weathered man, clad in nothing but loin-cloth, Nepali cap and waistcoat, who was returning from his fields with his plough on his shoulder and his kukri in his waist-band. "No!" he said cheerfully; "you won't reach Khuwapani in Chaubise tonight!" He pointed out the path in the gathering dusk, and we pressed on. The way ran along bunds and across ploughed fields, and in the dark we could feel that the hillside fell away steeply below us.

At about nine o'clock we were

still battling along this narrow, ill-defined path that ran about three-quarters of the way up a long valley that we believed to be in Chaubise. Occasionally we passed lone houses, and were told at each with the same enthusiastic pessimism that it was miles to Khuwapani and that we would never get there. However, I had promised Kajiman by letter that I would arrive at his house on Saturday evening, and by this time the memory of my promise had hardened into a grim, if somewhat desperate, determination.

Eventually we were told that the next house we should come to was in the area generally known as Khuwapani. Soon the barking of the dogs told us that we were approaching it; and we made our way cautiously towards a tiny wattle hut, the home of a very poor farmer. He knew Captain Kajiman well (did he not win a Bahaduri in the Burma War?) and insisted that we should rest awhile and take a cup of *raksi* and some curried vegetables, after which his son would guide us to Captain Kajiman's house. I now had a fair explanation for one of the Gurkha's military qualities. Even in their peaceful home life they give the appearance of being in the middle of a campaign, and this man, sleeping on his verandah under a single rough blanket in the chill winter air, did not evince a great deal of surprise when complete strangers woke his entire family in the middle of the night.

His son, carrying a paraffin-lantern, led us down a few terraces to Kajiman's substantial two-storey house and threw pebbles up at the heavily-shuttered windows until someone answered. Again, when Kajiman awoke, there was no hint of even veiled annoyance at guests who arrived at such an impossible hour. His wife was soon out of their sleeping-chamber, and after she had laid down blankets and bolsters for us on the upstairs verandah, was to be heard chivying the other women of the household. In a very short time she brought up steaming brass platters of rice with bowls of deliciously salty black *dal* and curried potatoes, and of course *raksi*, the hill spirit made from maize.

After the meal a comforting warmth stole over us, and the sharp tang of tobacco from Kajiman's hookah hung upon the night air. Outside, the full moon had risen and stood high above the rounded tops of his tangerine-trees. There was no inclination to go to sleep now, and a pensioner friend of Kajiman's had joined us, a typical Limbu with long, sallow features, eyes slightly drawn down at the corners, and a thin strip of drooping moustache. Conversation came in brief, monosyllabic spasms, punctuated by long pulls at cigarette or hookah. Here, in classically simple surroundings without the distractions of artificial sound or light, one felt that spoken words were of ponderous significance and fell upon the ears of eternity.

I awoke the next morning to hear a curious booming sound that seemed to be moving on the bare crest of the hill above us. I crawled out

from the blankets and, looking up the hill, saw a little man marching along the edge of a field. The noise was coming from the huge drum slung diagonally across him—a *Chyebrung* drum, so named from the noise it made. *Chye-brung dhung! Chye-brung dhung!* it went, in time with his dignified pace. "There is a wedding up the hill today," said Kajiman, "and he is calling everybody in the village to it." 'How lucky I am,' I thought.

At nine o'clock an enormous rice meal was carefully served by Kajiman's wife: she sat and watched with a bemused smile at the way in which I dug in so heartily. Then the women went down to the smoke-filled kitchen and took their own meal. Afterwards they all put on their best clothes: the men, clean white shirts and trousers; the women, pleated skirts of Indian cotton print, satin bodices, extra strings of East India Company rupees, and ear-rings of ridged gold plates the size of saucers.

The family then filed up the path to the bridegroom's house. In the courtyard two or three drummers were beating out the same measure at the same slow, dignified pace. A few girls had joined in the circle, too. The village tailor, by tradition also the village musician, was playing his own medley of tunes on a horn pipe, assisted by his small daughter and completely independent of the *Chyebrung* drums. But it was a grand day for a wedding. It was spring, and soon the early maize would be shooting up.

Shortly after we arrived, a tall, energetic and smiling man, whom I took to be the best man, persuaded us to go into the field behind the house. Here, in leafy bivouacs, the bridegroom's relatives were preparing refreshments. The whole village, about three hundred in all, sat down in rows, and, as far as I could see, each adult was served with a milky concoction of fermented maize, hot fermented millet beer, sucked through a tube from a hollow section of green bamboo ("It's very good for you," said Dilbahadur), and a cup of rice spirit. That was followed by pieces of frizzled pork (the small boys fought for extra bits) and curried slices of the big hill radish called *mula*. This was in fact the wedding feast—not sumptuous, but everyone in the village shared, and it put everyone in good mood. The air was intoxicatingly fresh anyhow. Here I made the acquaintance of a very old Subedar-Major who was the head man of the village and was obviously enjoying himself immensely on this important occasion. He drew peals of laughter from the onlookers when he discovered that he had been drawing his pension for many years before I had been born; before, someone whispered, even the First World War. He questioned me further. Not married either? There were some more remarks which I could not follow, but they caused the crowd to double up once more.

The millet beer and rice spirit had put a glow on most people by

now, and they happily obeyed the summons of the best man to return to the courtyard. The bridegroom had in the meantime been preparing himself inside the house, and he came out clad in a spotless white shirt and trousers of rough hill cloth and tribal cut and wearing the turban of the plainsman. He was followed by the best man, carrying an umbrella and a spear. The groom had a broad *tika* mark of wet rice spread across his forehead. He now had to be taken to fetch his bride, who was waiting under a peepul-tree a little way down the hill.

He was placed, not without a little horseplay, in a roughly constructed palanquin made of a sacking hammock slung along a pole, and his progress down the hill was marked by explosions of coarse gunpowder from a dangerously primitive cannon. The path descended by a series of narrow, terraced fields, and at each step the life of the groom was further imperilled by the cavalier handling of his attendants. He looked very glum and doubtful about the whole thing.

On arrival at the peepul-tree, where the bride's party was gathered, he eased himself out, regained his composure, and approached the girl of his choice. She had completely covered her face and head, except for the eyes, with her brand new Indian shawl. Her age might have been seventeen, his nineteen. The bridegroom now had to apply the *tika* mark of rice to her forehead. The first time he attempted to do so she backed away to show the diffidence required by custom. When the mark was made, spread thickly upon her forehead, she made a low obeisance, touching his feet, followed by a graceful *namaste*, bowing with her hands clasped as in prayer. Now it was her turn for a ride in the palanquin.

She was helped to it by a bridesmaid, who shielded her with an umbrella. Going back up the hill was, if anything, worse than coming down, and at times it looked as if the bride might be very nearly upside down. Perhaps it did not worry a maiden of the phlegmatic Limbus. As the couple arrived in the courtyard everybody began to throw rice wetted with milk. There was some discussion on who should be the first target, and they gallantly settled on the bride.

In the middle of the courtyard lay a blanket on which was a winnowing tray piled with husked rice. In the centre of this a small oil-lamp was burning. The groom, now carrying his spear, walked round the blanket four times, followed by the bride, still supported by her maid and sheltered by the umbrella. The crowd kept up the rice-throwing with increasing accuracy.

After this it was the turn of the bridegroom's family to accept the bride into the family. First his father pressed more rice onto the girl's forehead, then, as a courtesy, on the old Subedar, who, by this time, had been at the *raksi* pots a few times. He was very popular with the rest of the village, and there

were cheers as he swayed forward to give the bride a fatherly pat on the back. Now the women of the household came forward, and each covered the bride's head with a new shawl, took it off again and handed it to the next to do the same. Then the couple went inside the house, where the *phedangma*, the Limbu priest, performed the ancient and secret ceremony that bound them together, and we saw no more of them.

The drums had started up again, and more and more people were joining the dance. Our party returned to Kajiman's house for the evening meal.

Later I was curious to watch; for the eerie, monotonous throb of the drums still sounded upon the night air. We put on coats, for it had turned chilly, and went up the hill again. The dance was taking place in the large field where the feast had been served, and there were still more than two hundred people there. The fires had been banked up, and occasional spurts of flame from the smoking piles illumined the swaying circles round them. The drums boomed out across the valley for all in Chaubise to hear, and young men and girls stood in circles round the fires, barely moving, but swaying gently to their compelling throb. Children ran in and out of the knots of dancers, and a shy group of girls were being unnecessarily coy, giving sidelong glances over the edges of their shawls. A wizened Limbu passed me a home-grown cigarette in a twist of maize leaf, with an apology for its coarseness. I took the hint and returned him one of mine.

The smoke from the fires streamed in quivering columns to the stars, and my thoughts became detached. I was an intruder from another world and another age, looking upon scenes that had happened long ago and had been momentarily plucked out of time. Who were these Limbus? Where did they come from? What wasted expanse saw their birth as a living nation, first heard their clipped speech? Who taught them to make their slender-bladed kukris, built up of fine laminations of steel, forged by days of ceaseless hammering, and tempered in the mountain streams? By what wars and adventures did they come to these barren hills, laughing rivulets and shady groves? Did they once in former times fight in other armies that were used of God to shape the destiny of the world? And now, in the latter days, to what battlefield, what Armageddon, would their warriors be led?

The grave, deliberate measure of the *Chyebrung* drums suggested nothing that would disclose the secrets of the taciturn Limbus. They spoke only of the future: they were declaring a challenge to any that should heed it.

MAGA'S REVIEWS

BY ROBERT H. HILL

Noni Jabavu. *Drawn in Colour*. 208 pp. (Murray.) 18s.

Only an African could have written this book about Africans: perhaps only an African with a foothold also in Europe, which allows the continent to be viewed from outside as well as from within. Miss Noni Jabavu, belonging by birth to the Bantu race but educated and married in England, starts with that double qualification. Her book is partly an account of some events in her own life, but she is not simply telling a story. Her observant eye and reflective mind see in these private experiences illustrations of the problems and perplexities of Africa in a time of transition. She was recalled to South Africa for the funeral of her brother, a victim of Johannesburg gangsters, and went on to visit a married sister in Uganda, whose failure to communicate with her family had caused anxiety. There she was shocked to discover deep divergences between the outlooks of East and South African peoples with regard to the home and to the position of women; for that reason her sister's marriage was foundering, and she set to work to save it, if possible, from total shipwreck.

On this thread of narrative are strung descriptions of native life both in the South and in the less advanced East, in an age when westernised manners mix uneasily with inherited ideas and customs. 'Our sovereign concepts of life have to be rudely adapted to new patterns.' Miss Jabavu touches only slightly on the topics that fill the newspapers: on nationalism, *apartheid*, the colour clash in its political aspects. Her view of Africa is not detached (far from it) but it is not blurred by passion or prejudices. She quotes some words heard from her elders: 'In the old days it was better for an African to deal with a Boer than with an Englishman. What ruined the Boer was when the Englishman, having vanquished and thrashed him in war, handed the whip to the loser with that 1910 Act of The Union of South Africa.' The Englishman brought up to regard the Union as a crowning achievement of Asquithian Liberal statesmanship must pause to think, when Africans condemn it as an act of 'incredible, dessicated, crass intellectualism' and 'an inexplicable psychology.' In fact, there is a good deal worth thinking about in this picture of a continent suspended between two worlds.

J. R. M. Butler. *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), 1882-1940*. 385 pp. (Macmillan.) 42s.

It is twenty years since Lord Lothian died, at a critical moment of history. That he died in America, removed from the direct impact of war and yet (as British Ambassador) so deeply involved in it, has a kind of symbolic fitness. For here was a man who was active and influential in the political life of his time, yet who seems always to stand a little removed from the hurly-burly of politics. An aristocratic aloofness? Hardly; for his outlook was democratic, and but for the accident of his succession to a peerage he might well have found himself in the Commons, and holding office. Perhaps one thinks of

him as being in political life yet not wholly of it because of the very wideness of his interests: it was the large imperial issues which attracted him, not the domestic disputes of everyday. In the thirties he failed, as many others failed, to discern the true character of Hitler and his gang, and he clung even longer than most people to the belief that a peaceful accommodation with the Nazis was possible. He should be remembered, however, not for that failure of judgment but for his work under Milner in South Africa, his labours for India on the Franchise Committee, and for the Commonwealth generally as secretary of the Rhodes Trust.

Indeed he would be remembered chiefly for these things if he had died two years sooner than he did. As it was, those last two years gave him a larger claim on his country's gratitude. Sir Winston Churchill called Lord Lothian the greatest Ambassador to the United States that we have ever had, and his work in Washington in the perilous days of 1940 earned him a place among the architects of the victory he did not live to see. Sir James Butler's biography deals faithfully with every side of his career and character. Though it is chiefly the story of his public life, the more personal aspect is not disregarded, and in particular the book emphasises the strongly religious bent of Lothian's character, which in youth made him consider entering the Roman Catholic priesthood and later found its satisfaction in Christian Science.

Andrew Shirley. *South from Toulouse.* 252 pp. (Chatto & Windus.) 25s.

The ingredients are by now familiar. Take history and architecture in roughly equal proportions, stir in some topographical description, then sprinkle generously with comments on local dishes and vintages, and you have the confection. Of course success depends on the mixing and flavouring, and here the late Andrew Shirley has proved himself an experienced cook. He has led us by devious routes through the country around Toulouse and southward to the Pyrenees. He was a cultivated guide, as helpful over a menu or wine-list as over an architectural detail or some illumination of the past. He seems also to have been agreeably free from prejudices . . . apart from a strong aversion to the late President Wilson. When in a Toulouse bookshop he inquired for works about the Albigensian heresy, the amazed proprietor at once exhibited him to a fellow-customer as a curiosity. ('"Monsieur, I have something here to show you which perhaps you will never have seen before—an Englishman who is interested in our wars of Albi. Have you ever met such a type?" "No," said the professor.')

In 'South from Toulouse' he travels with an unflagging zest for whatever may turn up. From contemplating prehistoric cave paintings at Niaux he proceeds to the discovery, at Rodez railway station, of a thrush pâté 'so light and flavoured that you know instinctively who had the soft fruit from your garden.' From reminders of Ingres at Montauban, or of Toulouse-Lautrec at the Château du Bosc, he moves on to investigate the caves where the Roquefort cheeses have been made since Roman times. And so on, hither and thither over the kilometres and the centuries. Yes, a well-served dish for a bookish traveller and, like the dishes Mr Shirley met with, one to be savoured rather than gobbled; for the style can be allusive and intricate at times, and to skim through his pages is to miss much of their flavour.

Oliver Warner. *Emma Hamilton and Sir William.* 222 pp. (Chatto & Windus.) 25s.

The design which Mr Warner began two years ago with his book about

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Nelson is completed in this study of the other two sides of the Nelson-Hamilton triangle: Sir William and his Emma. Emma herself joked about '*Tria juncta in Uno*,' the motto of the Order of the Bath to which both men belonged. But what an affinity of opposites it was, how dissimilar the backgrounds and the characters of these three! Behind Sir William, the able diplomat with the tastes of an archæologist and connoisseur, was the long aristocratic tradition; Nelson, his genius apart, was the type of the aspiring middle-class; Emma, in all her grandeur, remained always a woman of the people. Mr Warner can refer to them as personifying Taste, Valour and Beauty, but he shows us behind these abstractions three human beings with faults as well as virtues. And as in each the virtues outweigh the failings, because each of them remains essentially attractive after 150 years, a new book about them and their relationship can still hold our interest.

Not least Sir William. Here he is no dim figure of an injured husband in the background of the Nelson-Hamilton romance; Mr Warner gives a rounded portrait of him. As envoy to the Court of Naples he was more influential than any English diplomat of the age except perhaps Sir Horace Mann in Florence; the Royal Society valued his eye-witness reports of the eruptions of Vesuvius; as a collector he sent home many treasures besides the Portland Vase which inspired Josiah Wedgewood. The author has been able to include some unpublished letters, and though some of the correspondence with Charles Greville about Emma's future treats a delicate subject in what today seems a curiously matter-of-fact tone, it does not alter the impression of Sir William as a man of essential kindliness and good sense. When he died in 1803 a newspaper obituary concluded by saying that 'of Sir William Hamilton it is impossible to think without the utmost fondness and respect.' Mr Warner does

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not quote that tribute, but his book leaves the impression that its warmth of tone was probably fully justified.

Sir Charles Petrie. *The Victorians.* 260 pp. (Eyre & Spottiswoode.) 30s.

The Victorian age has acquired the enchantment of distance. No longer does a younger generation speak of it with condescension or contempt, as if the word Victorian were merely a synonym for stuffiness. Today that age is in better reputation, and there are wistful backward glances at its peacefulness, its power, its confidence in itself. Yet it too was a revolutionary time, and the Victorian social revolution is the keynote of Sir Charles Petrie's study. Thus his book picks out some aspects of the period for special attention. There is little about the advances of science, only passing reference to the expansion of empire, very little on art or literature. The position of the monarchy, class relationships, the status of women: these are among the topics on which he dwells.

Here is no ponderous sociological survey; for Sir Charles has a light touch and is always ready to season discussion with amusing stories. And if among these last the occasional chestnut does turn up, it is remarkable how many more there are that are fresh. It was an age of snobbery but not of rigid caste, and by its end the middle classes had come to the top. Our democratic century has moved far from the time when a Gentleman in Waiting could exclaim," Don't kiss her, Your Majesty, she's not a real lady," on seeing the Queen about to confer on a knight's wife, by mistake, a favour reserved for debutantes of the higher nobility. Sir Charles gives us excellent chapters on the monarchy (power waning, prestige rising), on Victorian Scotland and Ireland, and on life in Liverpool. He is often at his best when he digresses; for example, when he muses at length on how fashions in wine-drinking have reflected the mutations of history. One can dip into the book almost anywhere, sure of finding some stimulating reflection and, as often as not, some witty anecdote worth retelling.

Roger Fulford. *Hanover to Windsor.* 208 pp. (Batsford.) 25s.

From Sir Charles Petrie's book to Mr Fulford's is an easy transition. While Sir Charles considers the monarchy as part of the broader picture of the age, Mr Fulford looks at the age, as it were, through the palace windows. His is the more personal approach; for his book consists of four studies of sovereignty, the sitters being William IV., Victoria, Edward VII. and George V. Here, too, is traced the change in the people's attitude towards the Throne, the growth of that popularity which is so abundantly, sometimes embarrassingly, manifested today. When George III. went visiting at Windsor, people in the house pressed back against the walls, making themselves inconspicuous. When Queen Victoria drove abroad they had begun to press forward instead, even peering under her poke bonnet. The forward pressure has certainly not slackened since.

The longest of these studies are those on Victoria and Edward VII., but the account of King William, who brought the tang of brine into the close atmosphere of Court and was always more of the sea-captain than the sovereign in manner, is sufficient to reveal him as a 'character' who perhaps scarcely deserves the limbo of forgetfulness into which he has sunk. The Queen Victoria of later years, so unlike the Victoria of 1837-40, was in effect the creation of the Prince Consort, Mr Fulford suggests. With King Edward the monarchy reached a new height of popularity, though the burden lay heavy on him in his last years of failing health (who

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now remembers that he talked of abdicating ?). It was he who 'civilised the British monarchy.'

One consequence of the present popularity of the monarchy is that books about royalty descend upon us like autumn leaves, and no doubt some could well be spared. But it would be wrong to include among such this contribution by a writer so competent to lead us through fascinating by-paths of nineteenth-century history.

Anthony Nutting. *Europe Will Not Wait.* 122 pp. (Hollis & Carter.) 12s. 6d.

Mr Nutting's is a short book but contains plenty for reflection; and rueful reflection at that. His theme is Britain's failure since the war to assume the leadership in Europe which the Continent was not merely willing but earnestly desirous for her to do. Mr Nutting takes his readers step by step through the history of our relations with Europe in the post-war period, to demonstrate that opportunity has knocked not once, but again and again, and always in vain. It is the Labour Government which in his eyes was the greatest offender, yet he is critical, too, of the succeeding Government of which he himself was a member. No doubt the opportunity to give a lead in co-ordinating Europe on a new footing was greatest in those first post-war years when Labour was in power, but Labour's eyes were on America and Ernest Bevin had less interest in European problems. And so the opportunities came and went: the Schuman Plan, the European Defence Community, the Common Market. Under Labour or Conservative Governments Britain's refusal to commit herself was founded on the same objections: a distrust of supra-nationalism (as distateful to Sir Anthony Eden as to Bevin, says Mr Nutting), and her Commonwealth ties.

The author devotes a chapter to this last, in which he argues that the Commonwealth countries, so far from objecting to the mother country's closer association with Europe, would even have welcomed it. He quotes an Australian politician as saying to him: "My country is best known in Great Britain for sending over a cricket team every five years and an army every twenty-five. If you fellows took a bit more interest in Europe between wars, maybe we wouldn't have to send the army and could concentrate on cricket." However, this book is something more than an inquest on the political errors of the past fifteen years. Mr Nutting sub-titles it 'A Warning and a Way Out,' and so at the end he makes suggestions on how we might recover some of the ground lost by the rejection of the Common Market. He has argued his case trenchantly and with strong conviction.

Noel Barber. *The Flight of the Dalai Lama.* 160 pp. (Hodder & Stoughton.) 16s.

As Russia has harmed herself by her conduct in Hungary, Mr Barber contends, so Communist China has injured herself by her treatment of Tibet. It may well be true in the long run, though the idea is unlikely to bring much present comfort to their victims. For Tibet there seems at present little hope of a better future. Mr Barber, a reporter ready to dash anywhere and face any hardship to get news, can write of the recent troubled history of Tibet at first hand; for he set off there at the first rumour of the rising and contrived to make his way across the frontier to talk with one of the Tibetan resistance leaders. Three months later, when events had reached their unexpected climax, he was back again to witness the arrival of the Dalai Lama in India, and to report the story of the hazardous flight from Lhasa as he received it from some who had taken part. He stresses

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that whereas Western peoples think chiefly of the dangers of that journey, or of its political significance, it is the religious aspect—the persecution of a god-king—that shocks the peoples of the East and disgraces the present Chinese rulers in their eyes.

Meanwhile the whole Communist machinery of indoctrination, deportation and forced labour grinds on for the subjugation of Tibet, and Communist China has gained a springboard from which to menace India. Mr Barber appears to feel as bitter towards Nehru as towards the men in Peking; Nehru's timidity, he considers, has been deplorable; for a strong stand by India would have given reasonable ground for hope of at least a compromise settlement in Tibet.

Cyril Falls. *The First World War.* 421 pp. (Longmans.) 42s.

The time has come, say the publishers, for the story of the 1914-18 war to be retold; and at first one is inclined to wonder whether that can be true, with so great a multitude of books—those narratives distilled from poignant experience, the official histories, the memoirs and biographies of the leaders, the studies of the separate campaigns—already on the shelves. But then one realises that probably it is true, just because so much of that mass of books is doomed nowadays to remain on the shelves. A younger generation can hardly be expected to read them; they will seek for the history of their fathers' war, if they seek it at all, within a smaller compass. Captain Falls's book should meet that need.

To compress the history of the war into four hundred pages cannot have been easy, even though he restricts himself mainly to the actual fighting, with briefer glances at the political background and the home fronts. Yet he has not allowed pressure on space to squeeze all colour out of his story. He shows us the men behind the crowd-

ing events and gives discerning sketches of the commanders on both sides. In Haig he sees a complex character hidden under the conventional exterior. Sir Ian Hamilton has been criticised for the wrong reasons, his one soldierly shortcoming being a touch of unsteadiness of purpose. The ineffectiveness of the Tsar Nicholas is brought home by a reference to him yawning his way through a critical conference. Sometimes, too, the author pauses to muse on the lost opportunities on either side which again and again could have changed the course or even the outcome of the struggle. Would Paris have fallen in 1914 if Moltke had not parted with two army corps for the Eastern front? What would have happened if Rumania had joined in two months earlier, at the height of Brusilov's great offensive? Or if Germany had struck hard at Russia during the revolution? Or if success had come at Gallipoli? 'The tragedy of missed chances, the might-have-been, often strikes the imagination more forcibly than a human holocaust.'

Captain Falls divides his volume into five books, one for each year, and gives chapters within them to each of the fronts, with special emphasis on the West. Clear sketch-maps and a sensible index complete a well-designed and admirably written book.

John Pudney. *Home and Away*. 224 pp. (Michael Joseph.) 21s.

"Writing," the young John Pudney was told by his father, "is not work. It's not the sort of thing that anyone would be paid for." In middle life Mr Pudney can recall this dictum with a smile, nor does it appear to have deflated him even at the time. Perhaps nothing could have done that, since he was so clearly destined for a writer's career. True, there was a false start with a firm of estate agents, but the embryo

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author usually has the knack of turning such experiences to his own uses and this one provides the substance of some lively chapters in Mr Pudney's 'autobiographical gambit.' After all, escorting a variety of people round West End properties and collecting rents in Soho slums could well offer more food for the imagination than, say, a Victorian blacking factory or a draper's shop in the Potteries.

While the Soho tenement dwellers, with their friendly cups of tea, were initiating him into one side of London life, Mr Pudney was also writing, and the publication of his first book of verse initiated him into another. For it was the key which opened for him the London literary world, and on the strength of it he was soon attending parties given by Lady Ottoline Morrell, where he talked to Yeats and watched Charlie Chaplin impersonating the then Prince of Wales. He writes of early days with the B.B.C. in London and Manchester, of wartime adventures in the R.A.F., of a post-war excursion into politics. Famous people appear briefly in his pages and pass on. At school W. H. Auden shins up a pipe to his study in the small hours; at Manchester he casts the yet unknown Wilfred Pickles in the improbable part of a Chartist agitator; much later again, he is Sir Winston Churchill's guest at Chartwell where, beside the swimming-pool, he listens in horror while his small daughter asks the great man whether he is afraid of spiders.

Peter de Polnay. *The Crack of Dawn.* 196 pp. (Hollis & Carter.) 18s.

Another and a more introspective piece of autobiography is this 'childhood fantasy' by Mr Peter de Polnay. It leads one into a child's imaginative world, but even the actual world here depicted has an air of strangeness. It was a world where money was not lacking; but for the motherless children there was no real home, only a cosmopolitan existence ruled over by governesses and tutors, and a flitting from one villa or hotel to another in Switzerland and Italy, in the far-off epoch before and during the First World War. In the background was the potent figure of a bitter and tyrannical father—significantly never referred to except as Authority—whose brief appearances were the occasion for thrashings and for summary dismissals among the staff. So Mr de Polnay portrays a series of tutors whose reigns were always being cut short by some real or supposed crime against Authority. Except for one whose cheery pranks culminated in the disappearance of the family plate, their offences were often no more than well-meant efforts to show the boy a little more of the world than the narrow circle which confined him. One of them, when his turn came for dismissal, even recommended his charge to run away, and was taken at his word; it was only one of several brief glimpses of freedom. It is not perhaps surprising that, in this fenced-in world, the haunting shade of Denis the footman, who had committed suicide, loomed larger in the boy's life than any living person outside the family circle.

There have been many books in which Edwardian childhood has been seen nostalgically in a golden glow. This one displays it in another light. Here memory has not gilded the past, and the childhood here remembered seems to have offered little excuse for idealising it.

Peter Greave. *The Painted Leopard.* 255 pp. (Eyre & Spottiswoode.) 18s.

The frontier between fact and fiction is a trifle blurred in 'The Painted Leopard.' This, says the jacket, is a novel, and the characters fictitious. It is when we find the principal one, the narrator, being addressed as 'Mr

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Greave' that we wonder just where reality ends and fancy begins. Not that it really matters; for this is a story in which setting and atmosphere are more than ordinarily important, and here it is evident that Mr Greave is writing from direct experience. The scene is Calcutta on the eve of Indian independence; the British are about to go, the air full of rumour of impending violence and massacre.

The central figure, a young Englishman down on his luck and now appalled to find himself infected with leprosy, waits and watches from the room in the sordid tenement where he has taken refuge from the outside world. His own world has narrowed to include only the fellow-tenants to whom he scarcely speaks, the young Anglo-Indian who visits and argues with him, and the girl Jessica. In his obsessive relationship with this girl the story centres. The wild incalculable Jessica, impelled by her own sense of insecurity to grab at every brief gratification heedless of consequences, is drawn with skill and conviction. In fact, all the characters are alive in their own strange fashion. All inhabit the filthy Calcutta slums, and some are as repellent as their background. But this is a book to read; for it gives a memorable picture of a world in seeming dissolution, which culminates in the terror of communal riots when howling mobs hold the city at their mercy.

H. E. Bates. *An Aspidistra in Babylon.* 239 pp. (Michael Joseph.) 13s. 6d.

When a writer has been in business for so long as Mr Bates, his clients need be in no uncertainty about the quality of the product supplied. Parcelled up in 'An Aspidistra in Babylon' are four long short-stories, or, as the title-page has it, 'novellas.' It is a form which allows Mr Bates to explore a character in some depth while yet restricting himself to one situation or incident. In three of the four the situation is not in itself extraordinary and the story relies on the unfolding of character. 'A Prospect of Orchards' hardly contains a plot, its interest lying in the gradual exposure of the natures of a rather pitiful little fruit-grower and his discontented wife. The first tale, notwithstanding its exotic title, is set in an English seaside garrison town and concerns a young girl's summer idyll with an officer from the barracks, and the rough awakening from a romantic dream. 'A Month by the Lake' introduces a pair of English holidaymakers in Italy, neither as yet quite reconciled to middle age; both are still quietly, and at length triumphantly, in quest of romance. Then in his concluding story the writer suddenly deserts these homelier scenes, whisking us away to the South Seas and into an affair in which passion and jealousy work up to a savage climax where knives and sharks do their bloody business.

All the tales are most adroitly told, even if they have not quite the charm of the perceptive childhood studies in Mr Bates's last book to be mentioned in these notes, 'The Watercress Girl.'

J. K. Stanford. *The Wandering Gun.* 207 pp. (Bles.) 21s.

There are still some books which leave an impression of having been written for the sheer pleasure of writing them, and these memories of a sportsman's life are clearly of that order. Most readers of 'Maga' (from which some of his chapters are reprinted) will know that Colonel Stanford is as useful a performer with the pen as with the gun; perhaps even more so if, as a shot, he is to be taken at his own modest valuation. He seems always more eager to confess a failure than claim an achievement, but the delights of recollection are no whit

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MACMILLAN

clouded thereby as the elderly sportsman revisits his 'butts of memory.' All are recalled here: his own East Anglia where he began to learn the art ('shooting is an art and not a science'), then northward to the Scottish moors, westward into Wiltshire in pursuit of the now scarce partridge, or down to the Lizard after woodcock.

Much has changed in the sixty years across which these recollections extend. Everything costs so much more and now the sport must be turned to profit, with all that this implies. Clothes have changed, too, and there are wry comments here on the vividly coloured slacks now and then seen on the moors. He recalls other incongruous equipment sometimes encountered, such as the entrenching tool habitually brought by an acquaintance who dreaded shooting a fox and having to bury it surreptitiously. He is on familiar terms with the older authors (but surely the Elizabethan sporting writer Gervase Markham cannot still have been going strong in 1675?) and he neatly dovetails their experiences with his own. He has, moreover, the knack of the unexpected simile which jerks us momentarily into another world, as when he writes of hares 'making blindly for their stand, like destitute orphan children to Dr Barnardo's,' or sees a flock of mallard, as the first shots ring out, deciding 'like diners-out in London, that there were other places to eat, equally good and not so crowded with impossible people.' It is a book which most enthusiasts for the sport will want to have and to keep.

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